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CHRISTIAN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN AFRICA FOSTERING THE REINVENTION AND REVITALIZATION OF PEOPLES & CULTURES

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NOTE TO CONTRIBUTORS:

The Ecumenical Association of Nigerian Theologians was founded in 1986 by pastors, university and seminary professors from mainline Christian churches. The objective is to critically reflect on and search for ways of establishing dialogue in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious nation like Nigeria. The pressure in 1986 came from the upgrading of Nigeria to full membership in the Organization of Islamic Conference. The focus of the association expanded from Muslim-Christian relations to interdisciplinary research—bringing together scholars from disciplines such as political science, history, law, economics, sociology, philosophy, psychology and anthropology, religious studies and theology—to engage in creative conversation for the good of Nigeria, Africa, the diaspora and the world. This is the focus of the *Bulletin of Ecumenical Theology*, a peer-reviewed journal, published since 1987.

Contributors, invited or voluntary, should have an eye on the multi-disciplinary interest of the *Bulletin.* Submissions are in English, but the editorial board and consultants have facility for translating from French to English.

STYLE

Articles should be between 6000 to 10000 words in length; and are submitted online, MSWORD format, to the editor, *Bulletin of Ecumenical Theology:* ecunigeriantheologians@gmail.com;
ecumenical_nigerian_theologians@hotmail.com.

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Volume 30 (2018): Christian Tertiary Institutions in Africa:

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EDITORIAL

The editors of *Bulletin of Ecumenical Theology* decided to address in this special study, Volume 30, the important topic of the Christian tertiary educational institutions in Africa. What role do the Christian groups and/or churches, the proprietors of these tertiary institutions, assign to the institutions that they founded and control. These are turbulent times in the difficult and challenging history of Africa. Times that call for bold and radical steps toward renewal, revitalization and reinvention of peoples, communities and nations. What role do the founders of these institutions assign to them in the reinvention of the continent? What are the historical antecedents to these institutions? These and many more questions preoccupied the minds of the editors.

When the theme was conceived and the call for papers were made, many scholars from diverse nationalities and Christian denominations came onboard. But as is usual in this kind of collective work, some could not meet the deadline. Instead of presenting to our readers 10 essays, we are able to present 8 essays that we consider well researched, informative and in ways revelatory of the driving intuition or insight that generated the "idea of a university". Because they are Christian, not only do these institutions aim at impacting mature Christian formation of African peoples, but they impact socio-political, scientific, economic and humane levels to participate in advancing or enhancing humane living, intercultural/interreligious dialogue, development and progress so as to reduce suffering, poverty, violence and oppression in Africa.

The 8 contributors address the question from diverse but context-based perspectives: the power of narrative, telling and documenting our own stories for posterity (Ilo), the impact of the Pentecostal narrative of the tertiary institute for the revitalization of Africa (Hilderbrandt), the premier role of catholic universities in facing the human challenges of the Congo (Mabundu and Ngalula), the role of Colleges of Education in mediating Muslim-Christian dialogue in Nigeria (Ajibola), the continued relevance of the failed idea of a catholic university in colonial Nigeria and the challenge of ecumenism (Omenka), the ongoing and developing story of the Spiritan commitment to education and reconstruction of human spaces and communities (O'Brien and Ukwuije).

The narratives are not perfect. Each storyteller presents a point of view. But the idea of a university, of tertiary institutions, is surely part of the narrative of the ongoing reimagining of Africa.

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THE FUTURE OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION IN AFRICA: NARRATING AND DOCUMENTING OUR OWN STORIES.

Stan Chu Ilo [1]

> "I have done something which is not pleasing to us and which is not in accordance with our customs. I have asked women to come to the meeting today. But more and more we shall have to do things that we hate doing, and which do not accord with our customs. The school in which I would place our children will kill in them what we love and rightly conserve with care. Perhaps, the very memory of us will die in them. When they return from the school, there may be those who will not recognize us. What I am proposing is that we should agree to die in our children's hearts and the foreigners who have defeated us should fill the place, wholly, which we shall have left free."[2]

Introduction

The questions which this essay will answer are: How does Catholic education, especially higher education, respond to the challenges and opportunities in the changing context of faith and life in Africa, today and into the future? What kind of research, teaching, and publications should be undertaken in the African Catholic academy within the broader context of Catholic education? What will the Catholic academy look like in Africa in the next ten years and beyond as sites where the great deeds of God are

[1] Dr. Stan Chu Ilo is presently a research professor at the Centre for World Catholicism and Intercultural Theology at DePaul University, Chicago, USA where he coordinates the African Catholicism Project. He is the President of Canadian Samaritans for Africa and the recipient of the 2017 Afroglobal Television Excellence Award for Global Impact. He is a prolific author. His most recent book is *A Poor and Merciful Church: The Illuminative Ecclesiology of Pope Francis* (2018); and recently edited *Wealth, Health and Hope in African Christian Religion: The Search for Abundant Life* (2018).

[2] Cheikh Hamidou Kane, *Ambiguous Adventure*. NY: Walker, 1963, 45.

being told in multiple conversations with some of the exciting and challenging realities of the people of God in Africa?

In the first part of this essay, I will propose a working description of Catholic education and the Catholic academy and offer an interrogative-hermeneutical conceptual and theoretical framework as an appropriate methodology for engaging the historical and ecclesial contexts of Catholic education in Africa. In the second part, I will explore in greater detail the historical context of Catholic education in Africa. Using a critical pointillist approach to the sociology of education, I will identify the limitations of mainstreaming of Catholic education vis-à-vis the historical marginalization of African fund of knowledge in predominant Northern epistemological frameworks and worldviews which shaped the method and mission of Catholic education in official teaching and in the missions. I shall conclude with proposals on some of the main tasks facing the Catholic academy in Africa especially in higher education and some approaches to meeting these tasks.

Catholic Education: Mapping the Terrain

At the end of his study of Catholic education in Africa, Robert Calderisi draws this very important conclusion, "for the continent as a whole, the Church's greatest contribution remains an educational system that has survived the political and economic turmoil of the last fifty years and still offers skills and hope to millions of Africans."[3]

The Catholic Church is an expert in education. One cannot conceive of the traditions of education in the world today without acknowledging the indispensable role which the Catholic Church has played in their emergence.[4] As John Elias and Lucinda A. Nolan propose, Catholic educational tradition is both rich and varied. It is a living tradition which continues not only as a body of work, but as a way of doing things that is the outcome of centuries of experience, prayer, action, and critical

[3] Robert Calderisi, *Earthly Mission: The Catholic Church and World Development*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013, 118.

[4] See for instance the comprehensive study of Catholic education from the time of Jesus to our times, John L. Elias. *A History of Christian Education: Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox Perspectives*. Malabar, Florida: Krieger Publishing Company, 2002.

reflection. Included in this tradition are works of history, theology, sciences, architecture, literary oeuvres, and the social and medical sciences.[5] Also included are works on astronomy, drama, and the rich treasure of human intellection and creativity stored in many Catholic libraries, archives, and museums.

The idea of a formalized education in the West was started by the Catholic Church. Thomas E. Woods in *How the Catholic Church Built Western Civilization* gives a well-researched data on the work of Catholic education in the West beginning from the innovative work of the Jesuits who pioneered the formalization of the university system in the 16th century.[6]

Catholic education, I propose, is the process through which people are socialized into the Catholic intellectual heritage in its diverse representations in the universal and local contexts of Catholicism. This intellectual heritage contains, "a vast repository of theological thought; philosophizing; devotional practices; works of literature, visual art, music, and drama; styles of architecture; jurisprudential principles; social and political theorizing; and other forms of cultural expression that have emerged in vastly different parts of the world in the course of 2000 years of Christian religious experience."[7] This heritage has evolved as Christianity crosses different cultural and spiritual frontiers, as "principles, arguments, and practices" have developed, as different Christian communities confront new questions, challenges, and problems.[8]

This heritage includes the content of belief, the logic of belief and the rationality of faith; faith and reason, human nature and the conditions for human cultural development. Themes include the nature and identity of the church, ultimate questions about life on earth, cultures and traditions, morality, virtue ethics, the habit of the mind and the habits proper to rational inquiry, contested questions about life and social existence, human

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[5] Elias, John and Nolan, Lucinda. *Educators in the Catholic Intellectual Tradition*. (Fairfield, Connecticut: Sacred Heart University Press, 2009).
[6] Woods, Thomas, E. *How the Catholic Church Built Western Civilization* (Washington DC: Regnery Publishing House, 2005), 47-66.
[7] Patrick McQuillan, Michael James and Timothy P. Muldoon, "A Vision of Catholic Higher Education in the 21st Century: Reflecting on the Boston College Roundtable", J*ournal of Catholic Education*, vol 21, no 2 (2018), 113.
[8] See the introduction to the Working Draft Statement, "The Catholic Intellectual Tradition in the University of Dayton", 2012.

suffering, justice and order, among others. Also incorporated are the process of teaching and learning in multiple contexts as well as the dialogical process through which people come to know the truth about things, and the communal nature of the search for truth.

Furthermore, catholic education also will refer to how God mediates truth in history and how to validate truth—in the sciences, humanities and liberal arts, digital technology etc.—within the ever-expanding understanding of God's work in creation. For example, the University of Dayton's document on Catholic Intellectual Tradition (Art. 12) highlights the origin and dimension of this heritage:

> The Catholic intellectual tradition is a tradition of rational inquiry that engages the resources of the Catholic faith with the great human questions and situations as they unfold across centuries and civilizations. This tradition was initiated as the early Christians began to reflect upon and engage the Gospels, their experience of Jesus, in a number of new situations. Throughout their history, Christians have wrestled with and drawn upon the best of human knowledge to defend, explain, understand, and better learn to practice their faith.[9]

Viewed in this light, I see Catholic education in Africa as a continuation of this intellectual heritage, drawing from it, and diversifying it through Africa's own unique story. African Catholic education, while maintaining links and roots in the Catholic intellectual traditions, seeks to follow the footprints of God in Africa by burrowing deeper into the experience of God's people in Africa and discovering what God is up to in Africa through the agency and faith of Africans. Catholic education in Africa is thus the documentation and transmission of the stories of God's great deeds in Africa which has deep roots in African pre-Christian and pre-colonial past. This takes up traces from past and present history in Africa's complex march toward modernity and her contact with religions, civilizations, and cultures from outside Africa especially Western Christian and Islamic educational systems. truth.

There are many questions which come to mind in understanding Catholic education in Africa: How are people being socialized into the faith

[9] Working Draft Statement, "The Catholic Intellectual Tradition in the University of Dayton, article 12.

and how are African Catholics documenting models of faith, spirituality, morality, social ministries which are emerging features of the presence of the Church in Africa? What forms of Catholic life and worldview, spirituality and morality are African Catholics developing which are transferable wisdom traditions for reading the signs of the times in Africa? How are African Catholic scholars and pastors grounding the understanding of Christian humanism, theological anthropology, and Catholic social teaching in conversation with Africa's rich intellectual and social justice traditions? How are scholars in Africa in touch with the specific life-worlds of Africans? What canons are being tested and appropriated for validating and transferring beliefs, skills, practices which can address the challenging and complex social conditions which have nailed the majority of Africans to the Cross of suffering, ignorance, poverty and fragmented social constructs?[10] What best practices are being developed in the academies for promoting human and cosmic flourishing?

These, in my thinking, are some of the fundamental issues which face the Catholic academy in Africa. However, it must be noted rather strongly that in an era of fragmentation of meaning, post-modern rejection of institutional claims even of a religious and spiritual nature, and rejection of traditional narratives of what it means to be Catholic based on the proliferation of churches and internal stress between authority and charism in African Catholicism, there is the need for clarity and distinction about the identity and mission of African Catholicism broadly speaking. It is also humbling to realize that one may need to 'thickly describe' what one means by a distinctive African Catholic education. This is not to say that the social and epistemological constructive role of education in evangelization within a faith-based setting is being vitiated in the African academy. Specific items in terms of funding for innovation and excellence in research, publication, and service, the quality and models of educational policies and programs at different levels, the formation and remuneration of teachers, standardization, acessibility to education, the disparity in quality of schools, quality control and the contested streaming of students based on some variables about standardization, equal educational opportunity, student's success are also worth addressing. However, they fall outside the range of this essay.

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[10] See Kwame Gyekye, *Tradition and Modernity: Philosophical Reflections on the African Experience* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1997, 29.

The point being made here is that we need humility, patience and hard work in research in order to follow the footprints of God in Africa amidst the multiple cultural and religious iterations which have given birth to present narratives of the mission of God in African churches. This is made more complex by the fact that strong Pentecostal and Charismatic cultural currents in Africa are widening the options for African Christians. However, this has not helped to bring coherence and integration to people's lives nor helped in effectively addressing the darker sides of the so-called "African predicament." It has not offered best practices in ecclesiology and Christian education in social justice, nor has it offered some transferable spiritual and moral traditions which can be replicated in different contexts as having transformative effects in the life and societies of Africans. This is why I propose that Africa needs Catholic higher institutions that will ask the bigger questions and provide answers not simply by blindly assimilating some of the untested populist answers being offered in popular media or in secular imagination. The answers will not emerge simply through an uncritical embrace of the ideas from new Christian religious movements in Africa, or through the unmediated adoption of educational models proposed by Rome, or replicating *ad nauseam* the received models of missionary and/or colonial education. Raising good questions might just be the kind of trigger needed in many educational settings in order to begin serious dialogue with African cultural traditions, cultural knowledge, religious contexts and social conditions of people. This dialogue should proceed in conversation with the experience of modern times in close contact with Africa's own unique intellectual history and indigenous knowledge on how to realize human and cosmic flourishing.[11]

The challenge for Catholic education in Africa is the same which has faced Catholic education across the ages. It is about embracing, upholding,

[11] Owuor defines African indigenous knowledge as "the complex set of activities, values, beliefs and practices that has evolved cumulatively over time and is active among communities and groups who are its practitioners. It remains so as long as the groups and communities who are its practitioners are committed to sustaining, creatively developing, and extending its potential enrichment within a specific setting." See Jenipher A. Owuor, "Integrating African Indigenous Knowledge in Kenya's Formal Education System: The Potential for Sustainable Development" in Handel Kashope Wright and Ali A. Abdi, ed. *The Dialectics of African Education and Wester Discourses: Counter-Hegemonic Perspectives*. (NY: Peter Lang, 2012), 67.

celebrating, communicating and living faithfully, authentically, and credibly an inculturated Catholic identity and mission. This identity is not an abstract construct but is self-constituting, deeply embedded in Africa's grammar of assent, and is genuinely open to learning from and enriching the non-African other. African Catholics and indeed all Africans who look up to Christianity in Africa wish to be accompanied in their faith journeys with deep theological and philosophical foundations which can give them strong doctrinal conviction and moral insight through a well-formed conscience to live as faithful Catholics in a changing world.

Maintaining Catholic identity in the higher institutions in Africa demands bringing together the claims of culture and the claims of God in teaching, learning, research and publication. However, one must admit that we are in a pluralistic cultural milieu which offers great opportunities but poses immense challenges in the way we conceive, live, propagate and defend our Catholic identity through our Catholic education. This calls for greater dialogue within the Catholic educational community, ecumenical and inter-religious exchanges, and collaboration with other publics which the Catholic institutions serve beyond the visible Catholic community.

Maintaining Catholic identity and mission in Catholic higher education has become even more challenging given the need to recover the evangelical ideal of a Catholic university, imbued with a religious dimension rooted in faith. Pope Benedict XVI spoke as much, in 2008, at the Catholic University of America:

> Education is central to the mission of the Church to proclaim the Good News. … every Catholic educational institution is a place to encounter the living God who in Jesus Christ reveals his transforming love and truth (*Spe Salvi*, 4). This relationship elicits a desire to grow in the knowledge and understanding of Christ and his teaching.

The institutional identity of Catholic higher education is drawn from Jesus Christ, and the Gospel traditions. It grows as a natural process from the heart of the Church, the teachings and practices of the Church, the cultural challenges and joys of the faithful in their pilgrimage of faith within history, and the daily experiences of God's people, and the groaning of creation as such. There is, therefore, a serious need for a new Catholic imagination and creative appropriation of the riches of our faith and educational traditions to renew a sense of love and community, eliminate

the barriers built within the Church by rank and status, the lay-clergy divide, and the divide between conservatives and progressives, the saints and the sinners. We also need to build positive and grace-filled relationships to replace the present forms of bureaucratic, monarchical, formal relationships and the impersonal and widening power-distance and risk-avoidance, embracing new ideas and new approaches to the changing context of faith and life in Africa.

In sum, Catholic education means openness to the splendour of truth and culture, embracing the sublimity of the human intellect in its search for meaning and wisdom, and appreciating the essence and destiny of all things. It also means a genuine recognition and discovery of the intrinsic goodness and dignity of every human being and the whole world of nature. Catholic education opens us to the grace of *charity in truth*, the priority of the community over individualism, and the joyful embrace of the beauty of shared experience, solidarity with the poor and the weak, and the splendour and freedom of belonging to the sphere of grace and salvation.

Catholic education immerses us in the bosom of Trinitarian love, sets us on the path of building relationship and connections with all people and all creation in the search for meaning and truth. It is comprehensive and capable of meeting the challenges of the present moment in order to contribute in building the kingdom of God here on earth. In higher education this assumes an important dimension because this is where the bigger questions are being answered, where new questions are being raised, and where traditions and cultures are not simply embraced in an unmediated manner, but are stretched, enriched, questioned, and deepened, while new traditions are born.

Catholic universities are centres where cultures and faith intersect, where there is a healthy and wholesome dialogue within the community of faith, the community of the academy and the wider community in the search for truth and in meeting the pressing challenges dominant within the intellectual, religious, political, or scientific community. Catholic universities offer the freedom animated by the Holy Spirit to seek and pursue truth to the very roots, and to understand the movement of the Spirit within diverse cultural and intellectual histories.[12]

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[12] Alice Gallin, ed. Report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Catholic Theological Society of America, September 11, 2000 "Theologians, Catholic Higher Education, and the Mandatum", in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae: Documents Concerning Reception and Implementation* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame

The introduction to *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* sheds light on this general goal and direction of Catholic universities:

> Born from the heart of the Church, a Catholic University is located in that course of tradition which may be traced back to the very origin of the University as an institution. It has always been recognized as an incomparable center of creativity and dissemination of knowledge for the good of humanity. By vocation, the *Universitas magistrorum et scholarium* is dedicated to research, to teaching and to the education of students who freely associate with their teachers in a common love of knowledge (1).

The Catholic university shares with other universities that *gaudium de veritate*, so precious to Saint Augustine, which is that joy of searching for, discovering and communicating truth in every field of knowledge (*Ex Corde* 2). A Catholic University's privileged task is, "to unite existentially by intellectual effort two orders of reality that too frequently tend to be placed in opposition as though they were antithetical: the search for truth, and the certainty of already knowing the fount of truth" (*Ex Corde*, 1). A Catholic university, therefore, is a place where scholars *scrutinize reality* with the methods proper to each academic discipline, and so contribute to the treasury of human knowledge. This research provides an effective witness to the Church's belief in the intrinsic value of knowledge and research. According to Pope John Paul II, in a Catholic University research necessarily includes *(a)* the search for an *integration of knowledge, (b)* a *dialogue between faith and reason, (c)* an *ethical concern,* and *(d)* a *theological perspective.* Thus we can properly integrate a fidelity to secular discourse, intellectual rigor, academic freedom, accountability to the faith community and the wider community within the whole compass of an educational enterprise informed by a Catholic worldview. This notion of education faces a considerable challenge when viewed through the lens of new insights in the sociology of education in the areas of transformative education, emancipatory pedagogies, and pedagogies of performance and hope.

Press, 2006) 413.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework for Researching Catholic Education in Africa

The contention of this essay is that the African academy—secular or sacred—has developed within some complex and intricate African and non-African worldviews and paradigms (ontologies, axiologies, and epistemologies).[13] Even though there are grains of African worldview, cultural knowledge, symbols, and artefacts in the African academy, Africa still develops her educational systems, content and curriculum in schools through a mainstreaming of knowledge and an epistemological framework embedded in the dominant cultural narratives of the West. This is why it is important to develop, as a first step in this essay, the conceptual and theoretical frameworks which should inform education in general. All educational systems are informed and mediated through certain worldviews, constructed knowledge, which are often referred to as a 'hidden curriculum.' This is what determines the kind of education which young people formed in that education system will receive and the likely outcomes from that educational system for all stakeholders. There are two broad paradigms:

(a) the *consensus theories* which "see society as organized systems and structures in which equilibrium, stability, order, and social cohesion are its prominent features while the agreement is the most preeminent social force."[14] Consensus theorists whether they are conservatives or progressives see schools as sites for empowerment for all students in equal measure irrespective of gender, social background, cultural condition, cultural habitus, etc. Consensus theorists see schools as a merit-based social agency for social mobility which is open to all. The consensus theorists disagree with the theorists who argue that schools are sites for class

[13] Handel K. Wright, and Ali A. Abdi, "Introducing the Dialectics of African Education and Western Discourses: Appropriation, Ambivalence, and Alternatives" in Wright and Abdi, ed. *The Dialectics of African Education and Wester Discourses*, 1.

[14] Benedicta Egbo, *Teaching for Diversity in Canadian Schools* (Toronto: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2009), 12.

war or unequal power relations between dominant cultures and minority groups which are structured for example in North America to preserve White privilege or internationally to preserve Western cultural hegemony, while sometimes strengthening the structures of domination, social reproduction and inter-generational poverty in the Global South. Researchers who operate from this perspective are more concerned with identifying the structures and systems which lead to a common curriculum, common core values, and a monocultural and generic school curriculum and a putative monolithic school culture.

(b) The second theoretical framework is *the interrogative theory* which was developed by David Corson in *Changing Education for Diversity*. Researchers who approach the sociology of education from this framework work with the assumption that there is "an inherent connection between education, social positioning, and power in society."[15] According to this perspective, schools are not value-neutral; rather they are sites for cultural and ideological wars which may be latent or hidden. Particularly with regard to minority groups like colonized societies or racialized societies, this war is reflected in the attempt to subtly impose a Northern epistemic framework in building a school culture or educational policy without regard to the diversity of students. This theory argues further that there are a philosophy and worldview which govern every educational system. These values are carried on and reinforced through cultural knowledge, cultural artefacts, cultural systems and symbols of the dominant culture in schools. This could be local or international. Socio-educational researchers who inhabit this camp proceed in their research by understanding how what Benedicta Egbo calls "the intersections of class, power, and privilege" is so critical in shaping the school's mission, mandate, policies, and programs and is also determinative in how they are designed, implemented and evaluated. A social justice approach

[15] Egbo, *Teaching for Diversity in Canadian Schools*, 13.

> and an emancipatory pedagogy in content creation and teaching, learning through the actual faith experience and cultural world of students, become an important tool to reverse educational systems which use a generic template to frame educational goals, pedagogy, systems and programs removed from the experience of students and teachers.

This distinction is quite relevant in any research about Catholic education because it helps us to identify the worldview and method which drive a particular educational system. Catholic education proceeds from a consensus approach based on common beliefs and practices. The strength of this approach is that having a common worldview and belief system and authority structure offer an "integrative purpose, enriching the curricular structure and coherence" against fragmentation.[16] The identity and mission of Catholic schools emerge from Catholicism's claims about the human person, God, and the goal of human life on earth. This assumes a normativity in its interpretation of the human person's vocation, and the meaning and goal of education. Mario D'Souza argues that this distinctiveness of Catholic education is grounded on its theological anthropology and a universal Catholic philosophy of education.[17] Catholic education operates from a classicist notion of common culture and common end which views the school as sites for evangelization based on a shared worldview and a shared faith. D'Souza sees this goal of common culture as decisive because:

> by recognizing the dignity of each individual student, the Catholic school plays its part in moving beyond religious and cultural differences to all that binds a diverse student body as human persons marked by personal dignity and united by their common humanity, who contribute to society and are bound upon a common human journey.[18]

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[16] A Vision of Catholic Higher Education, 120.
[17] See Mario D'Souza, *A Catholic Philosophy of Education* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 2016), 80-110.
[18] Ibid., 183.

Whereas the consensus approach has merits in terms of stability and continuity, it faces many challenges which could be corrected through an interrogative-hermeneutical perspective, grounded on two planks: the conflict and critical theoretical framework. Nigerian-Canadian educational theorist, Benedicta Egbo, proposes that the conflict theories "question the assumed neutral and value-free views of schools and expose how they serve the interests of the dominant group. They further argue that as institutions of socialization, schools reproduce the values, ideologies, and worldviews of the dominant group, and in so doing, reinforce existing economic, political and social inequities resulting in social reproduction."[19] She identifies two paradigms which reinforce the system of domination of minorities through mainstreaming of school culture, namely, economic reproduction and cultural reproduction.[20]

This conflictual framework for interpreting and changing the school culture is reinforced through critical cultural, theoretical framework. According to Egbo:

> critical theorists propose an alternative view of society that offers possibilities for changing its social institutions such as schools. With a focus on two issues (how schools help dominant groups maintain power and control, and how challenge and interrogation can interrupt the dominance), critical theory offers directions for change…Critical theory offers a framework that is germane to any discussion of diversity in schools. It sees the curriculum not only as a complex medium that perpetuates domination but also as one that holds emancipator possibilities.[21]

She particularly draws from recent research on the effects of the hidden curriculum, the pervasive presence of cultural modeling in the educational system and how to address the challenges of social reproduction and social inequity in post-colonial and racialized societies. She also proposes that this approach can help bring changes in those societies where there are negative effects of inter-generational poverty and deep divisions and injustice based on social class, gender, ethnicity and other variables.

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[19] Egbo, *Teaching for Diversity in Canadian Schools*, 13.
[20] Ibid., 14.
[21] Ibid., 16.

Egbo's research while directed specifically to public education in North America, as it affects people of African descent, offers us some useful categories for critical study in faith-based education. This is especially because it proposes useful keys for interpreting the adverse effects of common curriculum or common educational goal which is often proposed for African schools, seminaries, and universities by Rome. However, this is also a problem in other Christian traditions going back to the founding of the first modern Christian higher academy in Africa, the Fourah Bay College, in 1827, and the Gordon College, Khartoum, Sudan in 1902. It also shows the limitations of the generic educational policy and programs which are often imposed by the national educational agency on the whole nation without taking into consideration the differentiation in cultural traditions, religions, and histories of social groups even within a particular nation. The critical and conflict theoretical framework rejects the conservative-traditional approach regnant in Catholic education which is resistant to social change and pedagogical innovation of any kind. It rejects a classicist synchronic notion of culture and a normative reading of history, human nature, and human societies.

This critical cultural theory as opposed to the consensus theory is becoming very important in emerging Catholic educational practices. John Sullivan points to the need for differentiation in Catholic education. He proposes that Catholic education in all settings must embrace a process of transition, similar to what happens with sacred texts when they are read by a different audience. As new auditors engage the Word of God, they grow with the Bible, and the Word of God grows in them so that they can produce fruits from their roots for their own context. This is the creative and critical appropriation which should happen when the Catholic intellectual heritage is encountered in non-Western cultures: "In each culture, one comes across both opportunities and constraints in the task of conveying a tradition. Catholic educators need discernment in identifying the ways in which a culture presents both obstacles and aids to their task. There can be no interpretation of the faith which is entirely culture-free."[22]

The need for translation in Catholic education highlights the need for transitions and changes as the Catholic faith crosses different cultural and spiritual frontiers. The transition is already present in the catechetical

[22] John Sullivan, "Catholic Education as Ongoing Translation", *International Studies in Catholic Education*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (Sept. 2012), 205.

documents from *Divini Illius Magistri (*1929*)* to *Ex Corde Ecclesiae (*1991*)*. The Congregation for Catholic Education's (CCE) document, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* (1988), agrees with this need for translation in Catholic education. It points out that Catholic education "should be open at all times to authentic dialogue" (#42). This is reinforced by the fact that the goal of Catholic education is to develop in the students a "synthesis of culture and faith, and a synthesis of faith and life" (CCE, *The Catholic School*, #37). This synthesis can only happen if the construction and transmission of knowledge, skills, and values in the academy are mediated through the history and cultural traditions of a particular society against the prevailing cargo-based or banking system of education in Africa. Holter and Frabutt raise a question which faces every researcher or Catholic educator: "How will you respond to the challenges that face you as educators and leaders in Catholic schools? How do you ensure that you are developing policies and enacting pedagogies that create positive educational opportunities for your students?[23] The answers to these questions demand empirical research into how the school culture is being shaped by Catholic educational philosophy and local knowledge. It also requires accountability as to how adequate or inadequate this educational philosophy is when placed in the particular social context within people's faith experiences. Being in touch with the experiences of the people will require more than abstract philosophies of education. It requires stepping into the chaos of people's lives, being sensitive to their joys and sorrows, and pursuing research and publication in the African Catholic academy based on empirical evidence beyond a universalizing template.

The need for transition and changes in Catholic education to meet the challenges of diversity and social change has been demonstrated especially by Gerard Grace, founding editor of *International Studies in Catholic Education.* He proposed that the gulf between those who criticize Catholic schools as being out of touch with culture and modern society, and the defenders of Catholic education as the last bastion for protecting Catholic ideals can only be bridged through evidence-based research, from the social context of the people and their actual faith. He proposes that all research in Catholic education should adopt ethnographic and empirical

[23] Anthony C. Holter and James, M. Frabutt, ed. *Action Research in Catholic Schools: A Step-by-Step Guide for Practitioners*, 2nd Edition (Notre Dame, Indiana: Alliance for Catholic Education, Press, 2011), 1.

rather than abstract reasoning because "a comprehensive construct of educational inquiry must include engagement with specific faith cultures in given educational situations."[24] He goes on to propose why evidence-based research is solely needed in determining how cultures are being shaped in the Catholic schooling system and their implications for the continued existence of Catholic education in its present forms in different contexts and countries.

First, such evidence-based research might challenge the church and Christians on some of the assumptions and models which they have adopted in the educational practice for a very long time. Second, such evidence-based research may topple some of the "current political and public debate about faith-based schooling;" views based on prejudice about faith or Catholic education; generalized assertions and counter-assertions built over time devoid of any deep research or empirical evidence. Third, such research might offer theoretical frameworks and research paradigms to enrich Catholic education in multiple settings.[25] Grace concludes by proposing: "with the growing importance of faith-based schooling systems internationally there is an obvious need for more systematic research and inquiry into their spiritual, moral, and intellectual cultures and into their educational and social outcomes. Such research will need to be impartial, comprehensive and sensitive to the pluralistic range of faith traditions and communities."[26]

What is emerging in contemporary research on Catholic education, according to Grace, is a movement away from an apologetic and metaphysical interpretation and appropriation of Catholic education to a more "roots with openness" approach. There is now a fidelity to Catholic intellectual heritage that is understood, much more than traditionalism or blind assimilation of catechetical texts or doctrines. This calls for a shift from the classical defence of a distinctive Catholic educational ideal to a more experiential evidence-based research, a greater openness to diversity and cultural pluralism in developing culture-specific Catholic educational model at all levels. Among the ten emerging trends identified by Grace in the study of the challenges facing Catholic education in over 30 societies,

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[24] Gerald Grace, "Educational Studies and Faith-Based Schooling: Moving from Prejudice to Evidence-Based Argument, *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 5/2 (2003), 150.
[25] Ibid., 151.
[26] Ibid. 159-160.

three seem very germane to the assumption of the theoretical framework of this essay. First, the impact of secularization upon the work of Catholic education; the world is changing, and Catholic schools are being challenged to change, to hold in balance the tension between innovation and tradition. Second, the moral and social formation of students, teachers, administrators and pastors, indeed all stakeholders in the Catholic education system, is seriously affected by changing cultural situations and fragmentation which result from the tension between received tradition and the local context. This means that the answers provided in the past to formation and socialization, into a pristine Catholic culture through the schools, or even an ahistorical presentation and defence of Catholic faith through Catholic education, need to be addressed beyond a reassertion of doctrine or a simple modification of practices. Third, contemporary students' attitudes towards, and experiences of, Catholic schooling are no longer homogenous even in societies without much cultural differentiation in Africa; a homogenizing of Catholic education and Catholic culture is no longer to be presumed as a natural progression in the church's evangelizing mission.[27]

This theoretical assumption—which uses conflictual and critical theories to identify the challenges in the system, and which uses the 'encounter paradigm' harvested through evidence-based interaction with teachers and students in the frontlines of school culture—is helpful in this essay. It proposes that rather than adopting a monolithic banking approach to teaching and learning in Catholic education at any levels, one must pay attention to what is going on in the lives of people, their actual faith experience, their local and indigenous knowledge and history, in developing the content and goal of education. Catholic education is not simply a gift from Rome to Africa, but a gift which African Catholics must discover in conversation with different contexts of faith and life in the Catholic tradition. This approach proposes the adoption of a critical perspective to received educational traditions. It is uncomfortable with mainstreaming of educational curriculum, pedagogies and testing because of its disregard for local context and local solutions and its neglect of differentiated ways of learning in different individuals and different cultures. It also could lead researchers to a discovery of contextual

[27] See Gerald Grace, "On the International Study of Catholic Education: Why we Need More Systematic Scholarship and Research", *International Studies in Catholic Education*, 1/1 (2007), 6-14.

approaches to creating school cultures which mirror the experience—faith, culture, social condition, local knowledge, etc.—of every student in the school.

The conclusion one could draw from the foregoing is the importance of evidence-based interrogative theory research through narrative ethnography. Educational research in the Catholic educational traditions in Africa should concentrate on the perspectives and experience of the stakeholders—families, lay members of Christ's faithful, women, community leaders, as well as pastors and teachers—in developing dynamic and context-sensitive educational systems, policies and programs in the Catholic academy. What this means is that we must harvest the stories of our people from the fields; that the Catholic schools in Africa should be sites where we tell our own stories in our voices and languages. The importance of this framework could be gleaned when one looks at the African predicament and the representation of Africa in the received educational traditions from missionary and colonial times.

The African Predicament and the Question of History

It is important to understand the wider historical and cultural context of Christian education in Africa in order to appreciate the current contending narratives of modernity in the texture and goal of Christian religion and priorities of the churches in Africa. This will help scholarship to explore deeper how these cultural currents affect the narratives of faith and society in Africa and the place of religion in the emergence of the future of Africa. One will argue that though there are signs of emerging strong currents in African Christian education, which mine the vast reservoir of African cultural, spiritual and indigenous knowledge, as well as appropriate African style and models of believing and living, the African churches and African scholars of African religions are still struggling to find their voices and to take their rightful place in World Christianity. The exponential growth of Christianity in Africa is not matched with a robust development of African Catholic education nor with an African Christian academy which accompanies the growing Christian population with strong intellectual traditions and documented and transferable fund of knowledge.

My contention is that the recovery of the true place of African Christianity in world Christianity demands the rehabilitation of the place

of objective history in Christianity. It is this rehabilitation which will help reform Catholic education in Africa by locating educational goals, policies, and programs within the wider context of African history. The seriousness of this challenge can be understood better through noting how African religion and African rationality were represented in missionary education.

The early European missionaries condemned numerous objects of worship in Africa as idols. African Traditional Religions (ATRs) were dismissed as paganism, idolatry, heathenism, and fetishism. A prayer prepared for and recited by Africans for the conversion of Africa, stigmatized Africans as a people "wandering in the valley of darkness where they were destined to be lost forever until the Lord Jesus came to rescue them."[28] Among the Igbo of Eastern Nigeria, those who practice ATRs are still labeled pejoratively, *Ndi obodo*, used since the missionary era: an uncivilized, uncultured or barbaric person; a commoner. Missionaries viewed ATRs as devilish. African peoples were regarded as cursed, consorting with diabolic and evil spirits. Bishop Ajayi Crowther, the first African bishop on the Niger, commented: "Many a heart burns to see the day when the Gospel of liberty to the captives of Satan shall be proclaimed to the natives on the banks of the Niger."[29]

The World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh (1910) was a watershed because it unified all Protestant Christians in a concerted and systematic endeavour to achieve the goal of "evangelization of the world in this generation."'[30] At the conference, there was no indigenous African

[28] See David Isiuzoh, "African Traditional Religious Perspective of 'Areopagus Speech' Acts 17: 22-31", www.afrikaworld.net/afrel/areopagus.htm, page 10. (Accessed 6/2/2006).

[29] Quoted in F. K. Ekechi, *Missionary Enterprise and Rivalry in Igboland 1857-1914*, 5.

[30] I rely on Brian Stanley's article for a summary of how African Christianity was framed throughout this conference. See his "Africa Through European Christian Eyes: the World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910" in Klaus Koschorke, ed., *African Identities and World Christianity in the Twentieth Century* (Wiesbaden, Germany: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005) 116-180; see also Brian Stanley, "Discerning the Future of World Christianity: Vision and Blindness at the World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910" in Todd M. Johnson et al. ed. , *2010 Boston: The Changing Contours of World Mission and Christianity* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2012), 47-64; See also the assessment of the commissions 1-8 at the World Missionary Congress in the collection *Edinburgh*

delegate; only expatriate missionaries and eight White South Africans.[31] Brian Stanley shows that the three documents of this conference which touched on Africa and the intended thrust of missionary activities into Africa framed Africans and ATRs negatively. In the report of commission I, written by John R. Mott, Africa is presented as having no marks of civilization:

> The evangelization of Africa means something more than the introduction of the Gospel into the existing form of social life. It means the introduction of education and letters, of agriculture and industries, of Christian marriage, and of a due recognition of the sanctity of human life and property. The problem before the Church is the creation of a Christian African civilization.[32]

The report of Commission I further warned that Africa might become an Islamic continent given the Southward movement of the Islamic revolution started by Uthman dan Fodio in the second half of the 19th century which was sweeping through West Africa at the time of this conference. The report also indicated that African religions would easily crumble in the face of Christianity because Western Christianity was stronger and higher than the pagan religions of Africa with "their superstitions".

Commission II, according to Brian Stanley, saw African societies and religions as inferior in their morals, knowledge, and spirituality; hence the need for rigorous Christian education, and strict enforcement of Western Christian values and way of life. Members of this commission who had missionary experience in Africa or who read the notes of missionaries from Africa had a negative notion of African marriage and family: Africans do not have authentic family life; hence "with them (that is Africans) there can be no question of polygamy. It is simply one of the gross evils of heathen society which, like habitual murder or slavery, must at all costs be

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2010: Mission Then and Now, ed. David Kerr and Kenneth Ross (Oxford: Regnum Books International 2009).

[31] See my detailed study of the critical question of history in writing African Christian history in Stan Chu Ilo, "Africa's Place in World Christianity: Towards a Theology of Inter-Cultural Friendship", *Toronto Journal of Theology*, vol. 29, no. 1 (Spring 2013): 125-142.

[32] Quoted in Brian Stanley, 168-169.

ended."[33] Bishop Alfred Tucker's conclusion was representative of the thinking of Western Protestant missionaries:

> Through the influence and power of the Gospel, family life is now coming into existence in Uganda. In the old days, it was unknown. Parents never trained their children. Wives were never companions to their husbands. Now, however, parental responsibility with regard to the education and training of children is being realized. And it is not an uncommon thing to see a parent and children sitting together, eating together, and walking together. The institution of family prayer has had largely to do with this changed condition of things.[34]

With this kind of mindset, there was no basis for inter-religious dialogue, respect for African cultural and religious values, indigenous education, African institutions, social norms, rituals, and communal practices which held the society together. The same negative attitude was also stated in the deliberations of Commission IV which was charged with investigating "The Christian Message in Relation to Non-Christian Religions."[35] Stanley points to the entry of W. D. Armstrong, a missionary who served with the Regions Beyond Missionary Union among the Balolo of the Upper Congo. He was blunt in his conclusion that he did not find any religion among the Africans except heathenism and superstition: "The people have no religious observances to speak of. They have a few tales or traditions which are quite apart from religion. They might be called stories or perhaps fables, but they contain nothing of a consoling or helpful nature, nor have the native superstitions…..There is nothing in the beliefs of the people that is prized as a religious help or consolation."[36]

Whether these characterizations of African religions were driven by ethnocentric bias and racism on the part of the Western delegates, or by the widespread prejudice about Africans or the post-Enlightenment cultural and theological blinkers of these commentators is beyond the scope of our interest here. What is important to note here is that at the point of contact between ATRs and Western Christianity, ATRs together with the notion of Africa and Africans were framed in negative terms. This negation was

[33] Ibid., 171.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid, 172.
[36] Quoted in Brian Stanley, 175.

consistent with the narrative of Blacks and Africa in popular Western literature and calligraphic notes, as well as anthropological studies. These images, reinforced by the predominant pejorative narratives of Africans as a result of the slave trade, were to be consolidated into a system of cultural, spiritual, political and economic domination through colonialism, public and mission schools and its other imperialistic variants.

The Catholic Church's approach to evangelizing Africa was also driven by the same Western rejection of ATRs as pagan, and of African people as primitive and lacking any true religion. Catholic missionaries in Africa found justification in an obscure passage of scripture (Genesis 9:18-27) which narrates Noah's cursing of Ham.[37] This text, according to Benezet Bujo, was understood in Christian tradition to apply to Black people, who were cursed because of the sin of their father, Ham. In 1873 the Congregation of Indulgences published a prayer for the conversion of Ham's offspring in Central Africa, approved with a 300 days indulgence by Pope Pius IX. Part of the prayer read: "Let us pray for the most miserable Ethiopian peoples in Central Africa, who form a tenth of humanity, so that God Almighty may take away from their hearts the curse of Ham and give them the blessings of Jesus Christ, our God, and Lord."[38]

E. A. Ayandele writes that the Christian missionaries who preached equality of all men and women before God were before many Africans imperious masters. They emphasized the spiritual danger of converts storing up for themselves treasures in this world, but their compatriots were traders who concentrated on earthly prosperity, often at the African's expense. They preached against the sinfulness of drunkenness, but the Africans saw themselves being forced to exchange their oil and elephant's tusks mostly for exciting spirits. They encouraged Africans to imitate everything Western and gave them the impression that the less African they were, the more Christian they became. They led Africans into rejecting African spirituality as empty and superstitious but gave them nothing concrete to remove their fears, but rather to put their trust in the efficacy of

[37] Benezet Bujo, *The Ethical Dimension of Community*, (trans) Cecelia Namulondo Ngana (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1998), 135.
[38] Ibid. , 135.

abstract prayers to an unseen God.[39] According to Lamin Sanneh, the missionary method was very problematic:

> This concentration on missionary life as the model Christian life required converts to be dislodged from their cultural system and to be cast on the goodwill of missionaries. Converts suffered double jeopardy. They were uprooted from their culture only to be cast adrift on the fringes of the missionary community as adopted clients. Suddenly and unexpectedly, converts found themselves bogged down in an untenable contradiction, for the very attributes missionaries fashioned for them denied their roots in the societies of their birth. It was as if a stranger entered your home to declare you an alien there.[40]

Western missionaries did not respect traditional African values and in many cases, offered Christianity as a superior Western way of life. According to Chukwudi A. Njoku, the missionaries came to Africa at a time when the progressive epiphanies of the material culture of the Western civilization translated into an unprecedented cultural pride and triumphalism among the citizens: "Indeed, some of the rivalry between the various missionary groups working in the same missionary territories in Africa were hinged on cultural battles, namely, who was the more superior as distinct civilization: the French? Or the German? Or the English? Or the Irish."[41]

The instruments for the execution of this cultural project by missionaries were the schools. These offered the most complex scenario of the difficulty in separating the goal of the Christian missionaries and that of the colonial imperialist powers—both goals synchronised in Western

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[39] See E. A. Ayandele, "External Influence on African Society" in *Africa in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, ed. Joseph C. Anene and Godfrey Brown (Ibadan, Nigeria: Ibadan University Press and Nelson, 1966), 135-136.

[40] Lamin Sanneh, *Disciples of all Nations: Pillars of World Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 221.

[41] Chukwudi, A. Njoku, "The Missionary Factor in African Christianity, 1884-1914" in *African Christianity: An African Story*, 196-197. For an account of the rivalry among the Protestant and Catholic Missionaries in Eastern Nigeria, see F. K. Ekechi, *Missionary Enterprise and Rivalry in Igboland 1857-1914* (London: Frank Cass, 1972); See also Ogbu U. Kalu, *The Embattled Gods: Christianization of Igboland, 1841-1991* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2003), 178-212.

education. Africans who went to the mission school were indoctrinated into the 'Christian' way and the superiority of Western civilization; they assumed a higher place among fellow Africans because they could understand the "white man", gain access to colonial or mission jobs which offered a higher status and access to wealth. On the one hand, good education made one a good Christian as well as a good agent for the colonizers.

However, there is a strong argument made by Robert Calderisi that the mission of the colonialists and the missionaries did not always correspond. The Vatican encouraged respect for African cultures and traditions. He points out Bishop Shanahan's commitment to education as driven purely by the need for conversion, "If we go from town to town talking only about God, we know from experience that much of our efforts bring no result. But no one is opposed to a school."[42] Calderisi cites the instruction from the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith which warned the missionaries: "Don't introduce them to our countries; just the faith."[43] There are other evidence of attempts at inculturation from the 1920s. We see, for instance, the instructions from the heads of the missionary religious congregations in Africa: "Cast off Europe, its customs, its spirit; make yourself Africans among Africans; that way you will judge them as they should be judged and train them as they should be trained, not as Europeans, but in a style that respects what is particular to them."[44]

While an assessment of the missionary work in Africa is not our goal, my concern is to show four realities which are obvious from a random history of Catholic education in Africa: (i) Catholic missionary education in Africa sowed the seed of an educational tradition whose worldview, goals and methods were based on a pre-Vatican II notion of Catholicism as an undifferentiated sociological form into which the missions in the non-Western world must be inserted; (ii) this educational system—in both ecclesiastical studies, Catholic schools and higher institutes—has not changed substantially and so are not adapting creatively to the new challenges facing the Church in post-Vatican II, post African Synod I & II world; (iii) this educational system is still being run, like the missionaries,

[42] Bishop Shanahan, quoted in Robert Calderisi, *Earthly Mission: The Catholic Church and World Development*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013, 103.
[43] Ibid., 106.
[44] Ibid.

by clergy and religious with its inherent limitations with regard to professionalism, innovation, and academic freedom; (iv) this educational system is still under the control and supervision of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples in Rome and thus faces limitations in the lack of autonomy of local bishops and religious orders in shaping the goal, method, and content of education in the African academy. This makes it impossible for African Catholic educators to embrace the interrogative framework with its commitment to reform of the educational system, knowledge construction, transformation of the social context and accountability to the people of God, and all stakeholders in the educational system and contextualizing educational outcomes of Catholic education in Africa.

Roadmap to the Future of the African Catholic Academy: Some Proposals

Chinua Achebe's novel, *Arrow of God,* presents the story of Ezeulu, chief priest of the Ulu deity. Ezeulu sent his son Oduche to the mission school and encouraged him to become a Christian while he himself remained a staunch adherent of ATRs. He declared:

> I want one of my sons to join this people and be my eye there. If there is nothing in it, you will come back. But if there is something there you will bring home my share. The world is like a mask dancing. If you want to see it well you do not stand in one place. My spirit tells me that those who do not befriend the White man today will be saying had we known tomorrow.[45]

This representation is not simply a fictional reality of the past, it is still happening today. Ezeulu's wish for his son is the same wish of many African parents today—especially people of means—who love their children to be educated in the West or elitist Catholic schools in Africa which have Western connections. They make this choice because what is offered in Africa or in some private Catholic or public schools are often

[45] Chinua Achebe, *Arrow of God* (London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd, 1974), 103.

considered inadequate. This is also the wishes of many African bishops and superiors of religious orders who send priests and religious to study abroad because they do not believe that African Catholic universities can offer them adequate formation and specialization. It is important then beyond the critical historical analysis of the bigger context and history of Catholic education in Africa to propose some helpful steps into the future.

I wish to conclude this essay by proposing the way forward for Catholic education, especially higher education in Africa. First, it is significant to note that beyond the government, the Catholic Church is the single largest provider of education in post-colonial Africa. According to the preparatory documents for the Second African Synod, as at 2009, the Catholic Church in Africa had 33,263 primary schools, 9838 high schools, and more than 53 universities and teachers' institutes. Through her institutes, especially higher educational institutes, the Catholic Church is uniquely positioned to positively influence the transformation of African societies, cultures, and nations. With appropriate reforms, Catholic education in Africa promises to be a significant instrument for alternative approaches to human and cultural development.[46]

Historical Mindfulness and Documentation:

Every African teacher in a Catholic university or at any level of Catholic education should be a good historian of African cultural and intellectual heritage as well as the rich Catholic educational traditions. In the past, Catholic catechesis was criticized for indoctrination, and theologies in Africa were manualist and scholastic. In mission territories, catechesis was seen as an attempt to condemn people's culture and to present the Christian faith as the Western hegemonic construction of meaning and morality. Even in Western societies, catechesis was also presented as neatly packaged responses to pre-determined questions. It was neither context-sensitive nor open to dialogue, critical engagement, nor sensitive to the questions people are struggling with. Catechesis was normative, dogmatic, and apodictic in nature. But this is far from the way of God. The teaching of Jesus was a narrative which took flesh in the living cultures of the

[46] See further my discussion of Catholic education in Stan Chu Ilo, *The Church and Development in Africa: Aid and Development from the Perspectives of Catholic Social Ethics*, 2nd Edition. Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2014: 233-242.

people—less formal, experiential and drawing from the daily challenges and questions facing the people. Yves Congar points out that the stages in God's revelation and engagement with multiple cultural narratives also reflect stages of meaning which are shaped by the forces of history and change. Congar warns the church and theologians of the danger of not embracing changes in thinking and reading of history:

> There is always the danger that some stage already achieved will refuse to yield to further development, that the group or individuals who carry out the promise, who are the stewards of the seed and its future, become stuck. There is the danger that they may imagine their present experience to be unchangeable and definitive in terms of the forms in which the living idea finds itself already realized. Yet the dynamic power of the seed or the promise eventually has to surpass all the intermediate stages.[47]

This is an important message for Catholic educators in Africa. For the African academy to become centres for intellectual excellence, cultural critique, and centres for cultural innovation and the transmission, renewal and transformation of the Catholic intellectual and spiritual traditions, African scholars should be accorded the academic freedom for creative research, writing, and publication. This can be done in the following ways:

First, every Catholic university in Africa must be faithful to African history, and channel Africa's human and material resources to developing historically sensitive curricula, especially in the formulation of course objectives and goals. This is not to say that history should become a compulsory course in every program. Rather, it is a call for historical mindedness which contextualizes one's course, locates the content of academic program within a historical stream, and links the studies to a responsive commitment to the complexities and ambiguities of history in a challenging social context. This is particularly so in the humanities and social sciences where new methods ought to be developed to deal with the specific and localized nature of data which African Catholic universities are dealing with on a day to day basis. Case-studies of what is happening in Africa and best-practices from practitioner perspectives should be

[47] Yves Congar, *True and False Reform in the Church*, trans. Paul Philibet (Collegeville, Minnesota, Liturgical Press, 2011), 124.

integrated into every course or program. Part of historical mindedness should be the introduction of critical social justice pedagogy and performance in the academy so that every graduate from a Catholic school in Africa will not only have a deep sense of history, but also will pay attention to his or her experience and the experience of others, especially the poor and the marginalized, and be equipped to become agents of change in the continent. A sense of history also means that denominational battles which informed the establishment of some church-owned universities must constantly be revisited, and a more open cross-cultural, and inter-cultural conversation can begin to flourish in Catholic universities which will encourage mutual learning and "a commons of Christian exchange."[48]

Second, Catholic universities in Africa must not replicate the denominational battles of post-Reformation Western Christianity, transplanted root and branch to Africa, which negatively fragmented the Christian intellectual traditions. Today in many North American universities, Catholics and Protestants work together as partners in theological unions with similar educational standards and co-operative exchanges. Catholic universities in Africa should become ecumenical centres where the horizons of disputes and the sources of conflicts are constantly reviewed and questioned so that African religious people in the academy can co-operate and collaborate, conscious of the common historical challenges which they face in today's world. Any academic studies carried out in African Catholic universities without regard to history will undermine the goal of human and cultural development.

Third, is the need for documentation. There is the need to promote African languages in the African Catholic academy and to document what is going on in the churches—methods adopted by healers in the burgeoning healing ministries, texts and oral presentation of homilies, best practices in church leadership, diaries and archives among others. A good example of such documentation is the *Dictionary of African Christian Biography* which is an online resource chronicling the lives of over 3000 African Christian leaders in different churches and religious settings which help to tell the stories of faith and life in Africa. African scholars should engage in

[48] I developed these proposals in a previous essay, Stan Chu Ilo, *Catholic Education and the Challenges of Human and Cultural Development in Africa: Some Proposals for Inter- University Partnership* in *ACUHIAM Journal of Education* (ACUHIAM: Association of Catholic Universities and Higher Institutes of Africa and Madagascar), vol. 2, no. 1 (2011-2012): 55-83.

robust research and publications in order to leave behind resources for the next generation. Attempts must be made to publish and circulate in Africa, rather than abroad, knowledge produced in African Catholic academies to make them accessible to young Africans. More importantly there is the development of what Toyin Falola calls 'ritual archives', "the conglomeration of words as well as texts, ideas, symbols, shrines, image, performances, and indeed objects that document as well as speak to those religious experiences and practices that allow us to understand the African world through various bodies of philosophies, literature, languages, histories and much more."[49] These kinds of collection can help document knowledge, intellectual and religious histories as well as data about medicine, environment, science, and technology. It will be a form of institutional memory which can be enriched as history unfolds in Africa.

Inter-Cultural Education, Critical Pedagogy and Transformative Learning

There is the need for African Catholic universities to be multi-disciplinary in their approaches. They should integrate indigenous cultural knowledge as well as some Catholic educational traditions (especially classical thoughts and the ideas on the development of cultures and peoples) into the formulation of their programs. The sense of history also includes being knowledgeable about what worked in other civilizations, Western Catholic academies, and how to creatively appropriate them in Africa. This will help the universities to avoid the danger of fragmentation, isolationism or "tribal" Catholicism. The rejection of all Western or traditional Catholic educational heritages will be self-defeating, so also the uncritical assimilation of all things African. One who wishes to reject Thomas Aquinas' philosophical and theological (scholastic) methods must first know what they are, be able to put them to question so that he or she can show why they cannot (or how they can) be appropriated in Africa. An African philosophy student who writes off Hegel's philosophy of history in which Africa is portrayed as "enveloped in the dark mantle of the night" without understanding Hegel cannot put up a strong intellectual rebuttal of Hegel. African theologians who do not care to study the classical languages

[49] Toyin Falola, "Ritual Archives" in Adeshina Afolayan and Toyin Falola, ed. *The Palgrave Handbook of African Philosophy* (NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 703.

because they claim that these languages are destructive of African languages will not be able to put many classical passages to critical scrutiny. Adopting inter-disciplinary, intra-historical and inter-historical approaches will enrich the quality of scholarship in African universities to understand the global development discourse of which Africa is a sub-text.

Transformative Academic Knowledge

Catholic education in Africa should contribute to bringing about structures, systems and praxis which lead to change and improvement in the life of the Church and the faith and life of African peoples. James Bank makes a distinction between mainstream education and transformative academic knowledge. He argues that mainstream academic knowledge, "consists of the concepts, paradigms, theories, and explanations that constitute traditional and established knowledge in the behavioral and social sciences."[50] An important tenet within mainstream academic knowledge, according to Bank, is that there is a set of objective truths which it is claimed can be verified through rigorous and objective research procedures that are uninfluenced by human interests, values, and perspectives.[51] Transformative knowledge, on the other hand, consists of the concepts, paradigms, themes, and explanations that challenge mainstream academic knowledge and that expand the historical and literary canon.[52]

Transformative knowledge in the African Catholic academy should go beyond common knowledge and traditions all of which constitute mainstream knowledge to expand the stories of Catholic education beyond received tradition to local traditions. It should stretch the cultural and spiritual imagination of Africans in order to bring about new ideas, new methods and new ways of doing things. It should seek answers from within the Catholic worldview and appeal to solutions from within that tradition. However, it adapts itself to new realities through deepening the tradition and discovering, through the stories of people's experiences, light and knowledge that can help meet the challenges of communities.

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[50] James A. Bank, "Transformative Challenges to the Social Science Disciplines: Implications for Social Studies Teaching and Learning", *Theory and Research in Social Education,* vol. 23, no. 1 (Winter, 1995), 4.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid, 6.

Transformative knowledge is the result of evidence-based learning; listening and paying attention to the experience of the people and experimenting with local solutions which can complement or supplant received traditions. Transformative knowledge speaks to and from the context and experience of people. It embraces an analysis of power to question dominant cultural claims and institutional narratives which are no longer helpful in meeting the needs of students and of society. It is also oriented to social justice and to integrating faith and life in enhancing people's ability to discover local solutions to local problems. Its goal is to use education and the Catholic intellectual tradition to bring coherence to people's life and to ground their faith and practices in strong foundations and bring incremental changes at all levels of the life of people in their social context.

Partnership in the African Catholic Academy and Commitment to Excellence

The final point which needs to be highlighted here is the need for partnership among Catholic academies in Africa and their counterparts in other parts of the world; some commons of Christian exchange can be established in a more dynamic and supportive manner. There should be ongoing exchanges among African universities in terms of personnel, inter-university library loans, academic exchanges of scholars and students, joint publications, documentation, and journals among others. In order to create this partnership and tap into the talents and gifts of everyone, the Catholic Church in Africa must challenge the ethnocentrism in African Catholic academies and seminaries which has weakened many Catholic universities. This ethnocentrism rears its ugly head, for instance, when academic positions and academic advancement are based on an ethnocentric quota system. There should be a standardised system for measuring students' academic achievement. The same should also apply in hiring, tenure and promotion. Academic advancement should be independently determined through a peer-review process which factors in academic and moral excellence demonstrated through teaching, research, publications, faithfulness to African and Catholic identity, and social and pastoral commitments and authentic witnessing to the faith beyond the academy. There should be joint research and publication initiatives among

African Catholic universities along with continent-wide conferences, ongoing professional development and in-service training.

It needs to be pointed out that whereas Christianity is expanding in Africa and declining in the West in terms of numbers, there are more knowledge productions about Africa in the West than in Africa. In addition, Western Catholic universities still provide better opportunities and scholarship for further studies and ongoing formation. Most African Christian scholars, and most African Catholic universities, rely on Western universities for their publications and the stocking of their libraries. This scenario has considerable impact in hampering the contextualisation of academic productions from African Catholic universities.

Most African Catholic universities are largely dependent on Rome and other Western churches and universities for sustenance. This means that the cultural dominance of the West over African Catholicism will continue for a long time. However, instead of bemoaning this scenario one must begin to creatively tap into it to seek a fruitful and mutually enriching partnership between African Catholic universities and their Western counterparts. The goal of such mutual partnership will be to promote, for each partner, ongoing improvement in the quality and content of scholarship, authenticity of academic research and publications, and creativity, , through developing new language, new approaches to boundary crossing across cultures, denominational divisions, and different levels of consciousness.[53]

Conclusion

The goal of this essay has been to present a theoretical and conceptual framework for studying Catholic education and the Catholic academy in Africa. We developed an interrogative hermeneutical approach using critical cultural theories and analysed the present educational traditions in African Catholicism through a historical survey of the continuing legacy of missionary education and schooling in Africa. The essay proposed reform of Catholic education in Africa through a greater commitment to Catholic intellectual traditions, history, the context of the people and

[53] Werner, Dietrich, "Theological Education in the Changing Context of World Christianity-An Unfinished Agenda, *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, Vol. 35, No. 2, (April, 2011): 92-98.

allowing the actual faith and experience of African Christians to inform educational goals, policies, programs, and pedagogies.

The Catholic academy in Africa is called to contribute to the deepening of the Catholic intellectual traditions by telling the stories of God's great deeds in Africa in an African style and language, tap into the strong faith and ecclesial traditions in Africa as well as African intellectual heritage. Whereas there are many challenges facing the academy in Africa, I am hopeful for the future of the academy in African Catholicism because the foundations have been laid already in terms of structures and the calibre of educated priests, laity, and religious. What is needed is reform of institutional mentality, adaptive to change of systems and method of leadership. This reform will bring about the development of the right kinds of tools, the habits proper to deep and creative intellectual inquiry and scholarship, the right sets of personnel, institutional culture and professionalism which will bring to birth context-sensitive approach to educational policy, programs and pedagogies in Africa. This will also bring about transparent and accountable structures, faithful to the Catholic intellectual tradition and context in Africa, respectful of the perspectives and needs of all stakeholders in the educational enterprise of the Church. It will create the kind of supportive academic environments which will promote research, publication, and documentation of African stories, advance excellence in research-publication, teaching and service. The African Catholic scholar must also be faithful to the community of faith and respectful of some of the family traits of Catholic education from the beginning of the church. This essay calls for greater partnership, collaboration and ecumenical exchanges between the Catholic universities and other universities in Africa and those from outside Africa. These partnerships will no doubt strengthen the capacity of African Catholic scholars in seizing the opportunities and embracing the challenges in these exciting times for the churches of Africa.

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PAN AFRICA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY: REVITALIZATION OF CHRISTIAN WITNESS IN AFRICA

Wilf Hildebrandt [1]

Abstract

My assignment for this article concerns the dialogues which have led to the activities that aided the reinvention of peoples and communities through Bible translation, literacy, and the rapid growth of communities due to the communication of the gospel. I will summarize the development of a significant institution in Kenya from its small beginnings to its current influential status as a University. Perhaps the best way to describe the growth will be in the metaphor of the former years as Pan Africa Christian College [PACC 1978-2008] and the latter years as Pan Africa Christian University [PACU 2008-2018], with its distinct phases of development. The institution is now 40 years young and achieved its charter as a university in 2008.

Historical Background & International Roots

Pan Africa Christian College (PACC) was established by its founding sponsor, the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC), and began its operations in Nairobi, Kenya in 1978. Presently it is the first university in the world that was developed by the PAOC after the government of Kenya encouraged degree granting institutions to apply for university charters. The process towards university status began in the 1980's and was finally formalized in 2008. But before that milestone was reached, some historical background should be noted.

As a mission-minded organisation, the PAOC began sending missionaries to numerous African countries in the 1920's. As a result of their efforts, strong national church fellowships emerged in many countries of Africa. Continentally, these churches are generally known as the Pentecostal

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Assemblies of God (PAG). Through the efforts of indigenous pastors, missionaries, and evangelists, several PAG fellowships grew to over 3,000 churches by the 1980's. With such extensive growth it quickly became apparent that training and education for church leaders was essential. The New Testament model of Jesus who called disciples to leave their careers and learn the teachings of the Rabbi was taken seriously. Furthermore, the Pauline model of working with team members who were selected and trained for service was also implemented. In Ephesus Paul took an extended period of time to teach and train individuals for church planting and administration [Acts 19:8-10]. In this same chapter there are practical expressions of what Pentecostals claim to be a wholistic pattern for academic education and practical ministry. These models were influential in the Bible college movement that expanded in North America as well as in many global locations including Kenya. Education became one of the primary foci of the PAOC as churches multiplied.

As churches multiplied in Africa, a variety of means were used to train workers, including the use of curriculum resources like Theological Education by Extension.[2] While local church training and seminars were useful methods for education, the Bible college movement was considered the most effective way of training church leaders. Missionaries were mandated to establish training centres and curriculum to equip Christian clergy. In 1949 Pentecostal Bible College [PBC] began its operations in Nyang'ori, Kenya. Several Bible colleges were planted in other countries after PBC was established.[3]

The main emphasis of the Bible college movement was to provide training for pastoral workers in Bible literacy, theology and practical ministry. For decades the colleges awarded certificates and diplomas to supply churches with credentialed leaders [pastors, evangelists, missionaries, teachers, etc]. This proved effective, but it soon became

[2] The PAOC established Evangel Printing House in Kenya [1952] and a Press in South Africa to print TEE and other Bible study materials for use in a variety of training centres. EPH still operates in Kenya on the campus of PACU.

[3] Escola Bíblica da Assembleia de Deus Moçambique; Institute Supérieur Théologique du Congo; Liberia Assemblies of God Bible College; Missions Exposure Training, South Africa; Missions Transformation Centre, Uganda; Pan Africa Christian College, Zimbabwe; Pentecostal Bible College, Malawi; Pentecostal Theological College, Uganda; St. Paul College, Tanzania; Trans-Africa Christian University, Zambia; Pentecostal Theological College, Ethiopia.

evident that teachers and administrators for the colleges needed higher education. Typically, this meant selected personnel would leave the country for several years to study abroad and earn degrees. This arrangement worked to a certain extent, but it proved to be expensive and challenging for families. Additionally, some of the training in foreign contexts had inadequate contextualization of curriculum for ministry in Africa. As dedicated Christians inquired about opportunities for Bible training at the post-secondary level in Africa, Church leaders began strategizing for better arrangements. In Kenya the solution was found in the establishment of PACC for the development of an advanced theological training centre with a continental catchment.

A few considerations guided the steering committee. The first was the remarkable growth of the church due to the work of the Spirit of God that was evident in churches that emphasized the ministry of the Holy Spirit in all of its New Testament dimensions. The second factor was the sudden increase in the general education level of African youth. This resulted in the rapidly growing demand for college level education, not only in secular fields, but also in Bible and Theology. Ministerial training needed to be upgraded from the diploma level to match the societal increase in educational attainment. This was essential for urban church planting to cater for the professional, educated population in city centres. The strategy to have a Pentecostal practical emphasis along with an academic educational outcome proved to be effective. With these things in mind, PACC was born out of a vision to serve Christian fellowships and denominational colleges by preparing men and women to minister to their needs.[4] From its inception, the guiding directors determined to fulfil its vision of training church workers from a broad range of African countries for a variety of ministry roles within their sending churches. Hence the "Pan Africa" emphasis. The predominant vocational needs were for pastors, evangelists, theology teachers, Sunday school teachers, indigenous missionaries and Bible translators. In addition to serving the needs of the PAG national churches, other Christian denominations and organisations came on board to send students to PACC for training. This trend increased as the reputation of the institution grew.

[4] More than just a metaphor, an evangelist had a visionary experience where the continent of Africa was featured and a blazing light radiated from Kenya. Radiating beams spread from there to all areas of Africa and were interpreted to be the trained ministers returning back to their countries for service.

Nairobi, Kenya, with its central location and accessibility was a choice place for the college to be situated. An exemplary venue became available in 1977 to the PAOC who secured the property for the establishment of a degree granting institution.[5] The first enrolment only included 6 students, but it was a good beginning. Initially leadership and faculty were provided by theological educators sent from Canada by the PAOC. Throughout the history of the College, the PAOC seconded personnel to the institution until that was no longer necessary. For most of its history, the faculty of PACC was composed of an international team of lecturers. Presently the majority of faculty and staff are Kenyans. From the beginning of the institution, the governance of PACU included members from the main stake holders [the PAOC, the PAG and Christ is the Answer Ministries [CITAM]. With the granting of the charter, considerable transition took place to provide direction as Trustees and Governors. The governors are now mainly Kenyans and have a Chancellor who presides over the University. The Vice-Chancellor gives leadership to all aspects of the university and its daily operations.

Considerable work has gone into the infrastructure of the institution over the years. In addition to the initial buildings mentioned below, investment into faculty, staff and student housing was added over the years. However, due to land limitations on the main campus the majority of students are commuters. An administration block, classroom and library facilities are key additions in recent years. These facilities are maintained and renovated according to current needs, but future development will have to be moved to a 50-acre plot that was purchased in 2004 in Komarock area outside of Nairobi, when viable. Additional facilities at the Valley Road

[5] The location of PACC in Ruaraka area of Nairobi along with its unique facilities is a story in itself. Just after independence in Kenya, a few socialists were determined to propogate communism for the potential overthrow of governments. Leaders included high ranking politicians and personnel with a radical socialistic ideology. Facilities for the Lumumba Institute were rapidly erected in 5 months on a 20 acre plot with funding from Soviet Union. The core buildings included an administration block, gymnasium, library, dormitory, cafeteria and staff housing. After the first grad class of about 84 students in 1965, the real political, socialist intent of the institution was discovered and quickly shut down by the government. A few foreigners were expelled and some high ranking officials were jailed. Eventually through some complicated legal procedures the property was sold to a US entity called “World Evangelism” for their use as a training centre. After a few years of limited outcomes the property was sold to the PAOC.

CITAM campus are also used for evening courses. Currently, PACU has an impressive Masterplan in place for the next decade to develop the main campus to accommodate 5000 students, and with further developments to 10,000 students.

Accreditation to Charter

On September 6, 1978, PACC was entered into the register of the Ministry of Education as an "Unaided School." Initially, PACC offered accredited degrees in partnership with International Correspondence Institute (ICI) and its accrediting agency [Accrediting Commission of the Distance Education and Training Council in Washington, D.C.]. Presently they continue to function as Global University.[6] This was a temporary arrangement between PACC and ICI. In 1985, the Commission for Higher Education (CHE) was established to advance university education in Kenya, with particular reference to the co-ordination of long term planning, staff development, scholarship and the physical development of universities in Kenya. As the accreditation body in Kenya, the CHE was empowered by law to ensure that the standards of courses of study and examinations were comparable to those being obtained in the public universities. Because PACC was giving B.A. degrees before 1985, it came under the scrutiny of the CHE and was considered a private university. On this basis, the CHE registered PACC as an existing University in 1989. From that time to the granting of a charter in 2008, the PACC administrators worked with the CHE towards the upgrading of all aspects of education with regular reporting, inspections, audits, long-term plans and self-study document submissions.

A key issue, especially at the Board level, was the demand to diversify programs beyond theological studies in order to be a credible university.

[6] The PAOC negotiated with the International Correspondence Institute (ICI), then located in Irving, Texas, USA, and with PACC signed an Educational Agreement permitting the college to jointly offer the B.A. degree in Bible and Theology degree. Renamed Global University, it is a fully accredited non-profit Christian University, in the Pentecostal tradition, based out of Springfield, Missouri. As a worldwide distance learning pioneer, the university integrates education and service through a network in 150 countries, including the United States. Its three main languages of instruction are English, Spanish and French for undergraduate programs.

The decision to move forward as a university, notwithstanding the strong concern about mission drift, was a courageous one at the time. This was a demanding process for a private institution with limited funding, personnel and resources. However, several private colleges who were in the same process with the CHE met on a regular basis for support, development and strategizing. Each college worked on their own compliance issues and most of those colleges eventually achieved charter recognition. The core elements of accreditation included the development of faculty credentials, library holdings, infrastructural sufficiency, a minimum land requirement of 50 acres, governance and trustee constitutional documentation, budgets with financial resources, student housing and all the assets required for a functional campus.

Although PACC received approval for its academic programs, curriculum and standards in 2003, the charter ceremony took place on February 15, 2008. Pan Africa Christian University was awarded the university Charter by His Excellency the President, CGH, MP and Commander-In-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Kenya, Hon Mwai Kibaki, having fulfilled the necessary regulations in accordance to the Commission for Higher Education. The CHE was renamed in 2012 as the Commission for University Education (CUE) [established under the Universities Act as the successor to the Commission for Higher Education].

As the Government agency mandated to regulate university education in Kenya, the CUE carries out the obligation to ensure the maintenance of standards, quality and relevance in all aspects of university education, training and research. The Commission continues to mainstream quality assurance practices in university education by encouraging continuous improvement in the quality of universities and programmes. Since 2003 the CUE has approved 18 programmes up to the PhD level at PAUC, and another 13 programmes are projected for launching in the next year or two.

Enrolment

From the former initial enrolment of 6 students, PACU now serves about 4000. This number includes over 60 in PhD programs with another 120 in its 5 Master degree programs. During the first few decades PACC attracted students from over 20 different countries—not only in Africa but also

representatives from Canada, the United States and Korea have taken advantage of the unique opportunity for ministry training that the college offers. Most graduates returned to their home countries and some of them initiated or joined the staff of a college. As those institutions grew in their respective countries, fewer international students applied to PACU. One graduate returned to Ghana and established a Christian liberal arts university that continues to have significant impacts on Society. With so many options for study continentally and beyond, fewer students are travelling to East Africa, making the current enrolment mainly Kenyan representing a great variety of tribal backgrounds. Another development in Kenya must be noted due to its competitive reality. Currently there are 71 Universities registered in Kenya!

PACC/PACU Programs*: Revitalization of Communities through trained Leaders*

As the institution developed to its current status, programs were added to meet societal challenges and community needs. The following foci illustrates this development and further details can be gathered from the PACU website. Presently, the academic programs are structured into 3 schools with numerous programs in each school.[7] One example of the way PACU has addressed changing trends and opportunities is the certificate in "Chinese Language & Culture." This program facilitates the communication needs in business relationships between communities where there are vital interactions between Africa and China. Another emphasis in PACU is the importance of research that comes from dialogue and current needs assessment on the continent that must be explored for solutions. A strong research infrastructure has been implemented, resulting in productive efforts that contribute to community reinvention.

A Pastoral Focus

From the beginning the main curriculum focus was pastoral church ministry and graduates earned a B.A. in Bible & Theology degree. However, the

[7] School of Theology; School of Leadership, Business & Technology; School of Humanities & Social Sciences.

Pastoral focus did not impede graduates from finding employment in a myriad of jobs in a variety of sectors. The value of gaining a Biblical worldview that is infused with leadership models and principles provides a powerful foundation for entrepreneurial ministry. Many graduates have reported how their BA studies helped them to hone the disciplines and academic skills that allowed them to chart paths towards a variety of vocations as well as further studies in post-graduate programs.[8] The importance of this in the African context should never be underestimated because the demand for effective leadership skills is great when the size of institutions and churches are considered. Many of the churches in African urban centres would be considered mega-churches by North American standards, requiring significant leadership skill for management, structure and infrastructure development. Additionally, the demand for trained leaders in parachurch organizations and agencies increased, providing opportunities for numerous graduates.

In Kenya the PAG grew rapidly as churches were planted in many rural areas of the nation. From there, pastors also planted numerous churches in urban centres. Due to the urban transportation challenges, PAG churches are scattered throughout major cities. Some of these catered to specific tribal groups and used vernacular languages. Eventually a number of urban churches were planted to reach the growing population of educated business minded professionals who preferred to worship in English. These were often team led churches with foreign missionary leadership working with Bible college graduates. In Kenya, the urban churches that developed from Nairobi Pentecostal Church on Valley Road eventually became known as "Christ is the Answer Ministries." Cities were targeted for urban plants and many of them grew rapidly in tents or buildings that could accommodate from four to eight thousand people per service. Due to the extensive needs of such rapidly growing congregations, it was essential for each church to add trained staff for service. Many ministries were launched by these assemblies including Christian education, youth work, street children's programs and schools, plus the sending of missionaries to unreached people groups in Kenya. CITAM continues to be very missional in their outreach by sending workers to countries outside of Kenya. CITAM is a primary stakeholder that administers PACU through the Board of Trustees and Governors.

[8] Many examples are presented in the institution's "Pacesetter" magazines that are available on the pacuniversity.ac.ke website.

A Linguistic & Literacy Focus

In 1989 the college began discussions to address the necessity of intensified Bible translation work in Africa. For 150 years Bible translation was largely the industry of missionaries. The provision of Scripture into tribal languages was also considered to be the greatest incentive for the rise of independent church growth in Africa.[9] Vernacular translation brought profound enablement to ethnic groups to understand the teachings of Scripture in ways that provided liberty and contributed "to the recovery by Africans of the cultural identity of their tribe, later expressed in such bodies as tribal political parties, welfare societies, and particularly in tribal independent churches".[10] This valuation is the backdrop to the development of the B.A. in Bible and Translation Studies together with the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL). Courses began in 1990 and were taught by linguistics experts to specifically train African Bible translators and project consultants. PACC and ICI University jointly awarded the first BA in Bible and Translation Studies in l993.

This partnership was important for PACC and translation projects all over Africa. It was the first program of its kind on the continent, and perhaps

[9] "The spread of the church in Africa is inextricably connected to the translation of the Bible into the local tongues (see e.g. Sanneh 1989; Stine 1990; or Smalley 1991). As long as the Bible remained in the hands of the missionaries, it was possible for the missionaries to retain their control and authority in matters of faith and practice, at least in their sphere or domain of church influence. The translation of the Bible into the vernacular changed all that. It provided a basis for checking the sources and basis of the missionary message using the vernacular scriptures as a point of reference. The Bible in the vernacular offered local readers tools for interrogating and challenging this authority and control. Thus William Adrian (2007:289) is partly right in his suggestion that 'Bible translation has served to preserve and support indigenous cultures'. Moreover, Bible translation has also disrupted and been an agent within these same cultures, even causing the abandonment or transformation of certain traditions and values." A. O. Mojola. "The Old Testament or Hebrew Bible in Africa," p.1-2 [cf. verbumetecclesia.org.za].

[10] Barrett, D.B. Schism and Renewal in Africa: An Analysis of Six Thousand Contemporary Religious Movements, Oxford University Press, Nairobi, 1968, p. 133. Sanneh, L., Translating the Message – the Missionary Impact on Culture, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY, 1989. Stine, P. (ed.). Bible translation and the spread of the Church: The last 200 years, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1990.

the world, where the combination of Bible, theology and translation studies was taught. Several of the students actually worked on a translation of either the New Testament or the Old Testament into their respective mother tongue while studying at PACC. Graduates of the program were immediately placed in translation teams for project work. Another feature of the program was the combination of linguistic work with computer technology and software programs that allowed for the acceleration of project completion. There continues to be a legacy of astounding outcomes across the continent as translators present the Scriptures in vernaculars that transform community life through the contextualized readings of the gospel.

A Counselling Focus

The counselling department has developed quickly over the last few decades. This program is essential due to the growing needs of families who experience the challenges of rapid urban development and stress. The intensification of migration to urban centres for employment brings with it the typical pressures of insecurity, the lack of decent housing, education for children, and family dynamics when workers are separated from family who often remain in distant villages or towns. Additionally, Kenya has had occasional episodes of tribal and ethnic violence that caused displacement and hardships for families—often during periods of political transition.[11] Several PACU students we affected by these challenges, but many became active in reaching out to victims in order to offer counselling services and

[11] Cf. Adeagbo, O.A., "Post-Election Crisis in Kenya and Internally Displaced Persons: A Critical Appraisal," in the Journal of Politics and Law, [Vol. 4 No. 2, Sept 2011]. "The announcement of the disputed 2007 presidential election results in Kenya on December 27th, 2007 led to what could be described as the worst political crisis in Kenyan post-colonial history. This massacre claimed over 1000 lives of children, men, and women, and left about 600,000 Kenyans internally displaced. The immediate and remote causes of the crisis have been analyzed by different experts. Thus, it is pertinent to note that remote causes of the violence are traceable to the advent of multi-party politics in the 1990s and it was manifested in different forms in different parts of the country. Although exacerbated by political feuds, the violence had its roots in ethnic rivalries and struggle for ancestral lands. The internal feud had been brewing for decades and the election results were the catalyst and immediate cause that finally ignited the conflict."

assistance. Additionally, some graduates were involved in church led dialogues that functioned as advocacy groups to bring transformation in communities affected by violence. To address these issues, counselling courses were added to the curriculum in the 90's but real advances occurred when Social Sciences featured Psychology and Counselling programs at the university level. Once chartered, PACU ambitiously developed graduate study degrees to the PhD. level.

A unique program for Africa is the graduate program in Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) under the Department of Psychology [accredited and commended by CUE]. It is also accredited by the International Family Therapy Association (IFTA) in the USA. The program utilizes counselling clinical labs, communication studios and aims to expand the horizon of knowledge through teaching and research that creates awareness and enhances skills related to humanities and social sciences. This program was developed in partnership with Trinity Western University and ACTS Seminary in B.C., Canada.[12] Graduates are very active in their efforts to revitalize families and communities who have been affected by these dysfunctional family dynamics and urban life challenges.

A Leadership & Societal Focus

One of the natural outcomes of revitalized communities that became active in outreach and development, is expansive, rapid growth. The population rates in several countries in Africa have seen exponential increases over the last few decades and such trends will only continue.[13] This has significant impacts on the large communities which require services, not only in secular developments but for the church in particular. Some of the challenges that require attention to meet growing institutional need include infrastructure, buildings, land acquisition and the training of effective leaders for large

[12] For a detailed overview of the program see "Strengthening and Creating Resilience in Marriage and Family Systems" by Dr. Anne Wambugu in the 2016 Pacesetter magazine "Robust and Relevant," p. 15.

[13] The annual International Bulletin of Missions statistics show the trends**.** Cf. The Status of Global Christianity, 2017, in the Context of 1900–2050; The Global Distribution of Christians in Africa stands at 582 million in 2017; is projected to be 721 million in 2025; and 1,253 Million in 2050. In 2017 the same statistical research claims there are 669 million Pentecostals in the world.

people groups. Caring for a congregation of 200 is far different than crowds of 5000 or more which is fairly common in major cities. With this in mind, many of the BA graduates felt compelled to continue their studies to add administrative skills to their toolbox. In collaboration with Trinity Western University in BC, Canada, PACC launched a graduate program in 2005 to feature advanced leadership training with a MA in Leadership. The purpose of the administrative leadership program was to help professionals improve their leadership competence through enhanced commitment, capability, and practical effectiveness in specialty areas. The strength of the MAL program has now led to the approval of the PhD in Organizational Leadership as of 2017 with a current enrolment of 64 students.

The Department of Community Development also has a significant leadership role in revitalizing communities as the following observation indicates. "Those who are graduating have come from rural, para-urban and urban centre, and have chained themselves to the developmental programs and organisations that have created essence and value since most are employed, mature and responsible stewards. PAC University has therefore, contributed to making the Kenyan democracy successful, by evolving to the socio-economic order based on economic and social justice."[14] Multiple examples of graduates and their effective community work could be given but with limited space we mention *t*wo graduates involved in transformational community ministry in the not for profit organization called "Possibilities Africa" [PA].

The director of PA is Martin Simiyu who graduated from PACC in 1999 and went on to earn 2 Masters degrees in the USA [Moody Bible and Biola]. He works with Gideon Achieng' [graduate of PACC in 1999 and former lecturer of PACU] who facilitates the training and ministry implementation of PA. Their ministry vision stated on their website is extensive: "Possibilities Africa was established to work with people in the rural communities of Africa to inspire and empower them to create a holistic vision for transformation. The late Dr. Tokumboh Adeyemo, General Editor of the African Bible Commentary, has written that a change in the mind will affect both belief and the behavior of a man, will result in a radical change from darkness to light, degradation to dignity, poverty to prosperity, defeat to victory, backwardness to progress, fear to faith, sin to

[14] M. Kyai. "Establishing Relevant Blocks of Community Development for a Robust Society," p. 16, Pacesetter magazine, 2016.

salvation, sickness to health, despair to hope, weakness to strength, rags to riches, oppression to liberation and wickedness to righteousness. Such a total turnaround that helps people achieve spiritual, social and economic transformation is the underlying transformational agenda which PA is focused to achieve in Kenya and the rest of Africa. The holistic effect is achieved through mobilizing rural pastors, their churches and communities to undertake a combination of programs that together bring about a holistic impact on the community." To accomplish their vision they equip like minded servants in 5 core areas to bring significant transformation to their communities, mainly in Kenya and Malawi. This includes leadership development, church growth strategy, involvement and mentoring of next generation youth, promotion of economic productivity and advocacy services. For the last area they claim, "The plight of most rural communities in Africa is largely a result of poor policies and practices by government institutions and other stakeholders. Non-government intervention without right policies ends up frustrating good initiatives and intentions. PA will not involve itself in direct advocacy but will develop a program to equip the partners to advance good policies and practices in their own communities. Such programs will have to be rooted in good Christian theology and faith and not undertaken in similar fashion as secular societies. Additionally, and in effort to create more support for pastors and churches in rural communities PA will create a program to mobilize Kenyan and African Christians to invest their talents, time and treasures in the service of their people."[15]

Such transformation is fostered in a number of programs which emphasize the leadership outcomes of PACU. An example of the calibre of leaders associated with PACU is evident in the Universities' Chancellor.[16] Dr. David Oginde is also the Presiding Bishop of CITAM, which currently has 18 urban church congregations in Kenya. He leads a

[15] Cf. "Possibilities Africa" website.

[16] Bishop Dr. David Oginde holds a PhD in *Organizational Leadership* from the School of Business and Leadership, Regent University, USA. He graduated with a *Masters in Leadership* degree from the Pan Africa Christian University, Nairobi while his first degree is a *Bachelor of Architecture* from the University of Nairobi. He undertook his Biblical Studies at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (Trinity International University) in Illinois, USA.

ministry focused on reaching urban communities in Kenya, including schools, but also sends missionaries to locations in Africa, USA, Asia, and Europe. CITAM provides media ministry through Hope FM and Hope TV. It also runs a rehabilitation center for street children, and special outreach mission stations among the underprivileged communities in Kenya. Apart from his pastoral duties, Dr. Oginde is actively involved in speaking into and influencing national policies and issues related to governance and leadership in Kenya. This was evident during the political tensions of 2007-8 when the church provided leadership in a difficult period of insecurity. He is an author and writes on a regular basis, including a weekly column in the Standard newspaper, to give advice, wisdom and leadership counsel in many contexts.[17]

The work of the children's rehabilitation centre illustrates a visionary yet practical way that CITAM and its leaders address inner city problems. One of the difficult societal developments with rapid urbanization is the growing number of "street children" in large cities. To attend to the needs of these children, Nairobi Pentecostal Church began a feeding program in 1993 that became a rehabilitation centre to cater for the needs of street children beyond daily food and bathing. The (CITAM) Children Centre was founded in 1995 by Pastor Dennis and Esther White as a rescue and rehabilitation centre for street children. It was an exciting event to witness the dedication of the centre for 108 children in 1995. The main facilities include dormitories, a chapel and classrooms with a capacity for up to 192 children. The level of addiction and survival tactics of the kids called for a strategic ministry far away from the streets of Nairobi. Since these children are not raised in a family context and did not attend school, the rehabilitation process is very challenging -- the longer they have been on the streets, the more difficult the transformation process is. In fact, the preparation period before they are ready to enter school is often a 3-year program, followed by an education scholarship for children in primary, secondary and university depending on the interest and ability of the child. A wholistic program is offered with provision of all daily needs and education.[18] All children at the Centre are placed in small groups called

[17] D.A. Oginde. "Taming Ethnicity: Managing Intercultural Diversity for Effective Leadership," Africa Arise, Oct. 19, 2017.

[18] The objectives of the centre emphasize practical Christian expressions of love ["penda"]. "Provide the rescued children with an opportunity to experience the

"families" which consists of 5 to 10 children led by a staff member.[19] In this family context they learn how to cope in a totally different environment to the unsupervised street life they were used to. The centre offers an excellent model for emulation to address this growing problem in cities globally. In fact, there are a number of PACU graduates who are involved in the PAOC "Villages of Hope" which incorporate some of these practical approaches in their ministry.

A Youth Discipleship Program

Africa is a productive and resourceful continent evidenced by the young populations in most countries.[20] Primarily for PACC in its early days the

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love of Christ by addressing their mental, social, physical, psychological and spiritual needs. Empower families of re-integrated children to take responsibility for the wellbeing of their children and protect them from abuse. Nurture the talents of children and provide opportunities for them to identify and utilize their God-given abilities. Deliver quality education for the centre children in line with their intellectual ability, physical stamina and interest. Advocate for the rights of children and mitigate on pertinent issues that affect their wellbeing for successful re-integration to society."

[19] Rehabilitation covers the following areas: Training in social aspects such as personal grooming, communication, family relationships. Early child education which is a precedent of 8-4-4 syllabus. Education in regular school. Rehabilitation from drug abuse and street life. Spiritual nurture based on Christian doctrine with daily devotions. Psychological counselling and where necessary trauma counselling. Career counselling and life skills. Recreation with child appropriate programs and activities.

[20] "In Africa, the number of youth is growing rapidly. In 2015, 226 million youth aged 15-24 lived in Africa, accounting for 19 per cent of the global youth population. By 2030, it is projected that the number of youth in Africa will have increased by 42 per cent. Africa's youth population is expected to continue to grow throughout the remainder of the 21st century, more than doubling from current levels by 2055." "Youth Population Trends and Sustainable Development" [May 2015 No. 2015/1; UN Department of Economic & Social Affairs Population Division] www.unpopulation.org. The staggering growth can be seen on the world-population clock site which estimates the present population of Kenya as 50 million,

college emphasized pastoral ministry so that graduates would focus attention on the growing youth segment in their churches including the development of youth ministries. But youth have specific interests and needs which are often best addressed in focused discipleship contexts. An additional challenge is the rapid evolution of culture in urban centres where technology, internet and media have life changing impacts on adolescents. To address some of the needs, intensive discipleship programs were developed to provide solid Bible training and outreach opportunities for students to strengthen their faith and worldview. The curriculum provides for Biblical, spiritual and theological formation with a youth emphasis and includes opportunities for service in community and church groups. Presently PACU offers a diploma and a certificate. Both programs include mentoring, guidance, natural gifting discovery, communication, interpersonal and technological skill development. Additionally, there are mission trips organized to take students beyond their normal contexts into areas of need for community exposure and practical service. In recognition of the growing need to address adolescent matters, PACU organized the first International Association for the Study of Youth Ministry in Africa Region Conference in 2016 with delegates from Tanzania, Nigeria, South Africa, Ghana, Norway and Kenya.

From Graduation to Service & Community Transformation

From PACC's inception there has been consistent growth in the numbers of graduates but during the former years [up to 2008] the estimate stands at about 1160. From that time to the present another 1750 graduated. It would be impossible to detail all the roles and positions which PACC graduates have managed to hold but a synopsis of key positions is warranted.

In general terms, graduates are mainly involved as Pastors and church related ministries [teachers, evangelists, youth workers, administrators, missionaries, etc]. Another large number serve in Bible College administration as Principals and Deans. Not surprisingly, with the commitment to bring societal change and revitalization to communities, quite a few graduates serve various para-church ministries, Bible translation societies, Government agencies, AIDS educational ministries; mission

Uganda at 44 million, Tanzania at 59 million and Ethi0pia at 107 million. When these rates are compared to numbers a decade ago, the challenges ahead are evident.

agencies, chaplaincy, as well as not for profit organizations. Moreover, graduates of PAC University are accepted by major evangelical seminaries, and universities, all over the world. With alumni located in many parts of Africa and beyond, it is difficult to maintain accurate records of their activities. However, the impact of PAC University graduates during this generation is more than just impressive. Recording this "hall of fame" with their accomplishments is another project.

One example that shows a new trend in the 2000 years of Christian history is the movement of trained missionaries to other destination of the globe. Africans generally have an amazing tenacity and strength to move beyond the borders of Africa to distant continents for ministry. Just over 25 years ago, Dr Sam Owusu went to Canada for graduate studies after PACC and planted a church which is now a significant ministry centre in Surrey, Canada. Calvary Worship Centre has a multi-cultural representation of over 100 ethnicities and a membership approaching 2000 people. In recent years, CWC planted a church in Accra, Ghana where messages from Surrey are beamed into a sanctuary each week.

Of course, there are numerous institutions in Africa that are revitalizing their communities and making positive contributions to society--PAC University, a Pentecostal institution, is one of them! With its current enrolment, solid mission focus, programmatic development, research emphasis, highly qualified staff, and commitment to address the needs of societies in Africa, PAC University is poised for incredible potential and impact.

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THEOLOGY AND THE FUTURE OF SOCIETIES: THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE THEOLOGY FACULTY OF THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF CONGO TO THE RECONSTRUCTION OF CONGO AND AFRICA

Fidèle MABUNDU[1]

ABSTRACT
Founded in 1957, the Faculty of Theology of the Catholic University of Congo operates in the city of Kinshasa, in the heart of Africa, where it faces various life-defying challenges. Nevertheless, major characteristics permit this Faculty to contribute to the construction of Congo and the African continent. Notably, it concerns the following: its availability to professors and students coming from different African countries as well as the rest of the world; its choice, since its creation, to promote a robust theological science that is attentive to life and that accepts African socio-cultural values; its commitment to working in service to the Church and society.

A Brief Developmental History of the Theology Faculty of the CUC

The first Catholic Faculty of Theology on African soil was born in 1957 within the Lovanium University of Leopoldville (Congo-Kinshasa). Mgr. Alfred Vanneste, a Belgian national, had the privilege and the delicate responsibility of presiding as Dean over the destinies of the young Faculty. Over the years, the latter would be led to make some important decisions regarding its orientation. In July 1967, the Administrative Council of Lovanium University approved the program of a Department of Religious Sciences that shortly thereafter was named the Department of Theology and Religious Sciences. And so, in 1971, the faculty therein opened a Department of Philosophy and African Religions following the transfer to Lubumbashi of the Faculty of Philosophy, from which the students in Theology profited.

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After its suppression by the political Office of the Popular Movement of the Revolution, the Faculties of Theology (Catholic and Protestant) within the Lovanium University (which in the meantime had become the National University of Zaire), and the Catholic Faculty and its Department were transferred, with the support of the Episcopal Conference of Zaire, to the site in Limete (15th Street, in 1974) where it became an autonomous institution whose degree would nevertheless be recognized by the Congolese State through a departmental order dated November 21, 1977. In 1981, our Faculty of Theology was transferred to its current site in Limete (Saint Raphael) on First Street. In 1987, the Episcopal Conference of Zaire decided to change the "Catholic Faculty of Theology of Kinshasa" to the "Catholic Faculties of Kinshasa". And finally, at the conclusion of the 45th Plenary Assembly of the Bishops of the Democratic Republic of Congo held in July 2009, it was decided to change the "Catholic Faculties of Kinshasa" to the "Catholic University of Congo" (CUC), an institution of Pontifical right canonically set up by the National Episcopal Conference of Congo (CENCO) and approved by the Holy See. Currently, this university includes seven Faculties of which Theology occupies and enjoys the status of Parent Faculty.

The Present Situation of the Faculty: Some Challenges

The Faculty of Theology in question in this text finds itself in a University under construction and in a country that experiences serious economic crisis and profound social and political turbulence. This sad, dark, and highly tense situation that Congo has lived through for far too many years influences all of life in Congo, including that of the Universities. In this context, I would like to mention, without going into profound analyses, four big challenges that also confront the Faculty of Theology as well as our entire Catholic University of Congo.

The first challenge is to be a place of research and teaching. Every University is a human community that, combining teaching and research, implements a project of service to society. The first and without doubt the most fundamental of the University's characteristics is precisely this close link between teaching and research. Being in a world that is ceaselessly evolving, our Faculty is a place of research and teaching that transmits knowledge that isn't frozen, but is elaborated in a constant effort at

inventiveness, proposition, and verification. In these domains of research and teaching, the progressive use of new Techniques of Information and Communication (TIC) in our Faculty and within the entire University represents a real consideration of the development of the contemporary world.

The second challenge is to be of service to Church and society. The Faculty of Theology is a privileged tool of the Congolese Church in the sense that it represents its place of reflection and thought about faith and life. All of the questions about evangelization are dealt with there, for example those asked by the proliferation of Evangelical Churches, the encounter between faith and culture, etc. In fact, a Faculty of Theology in Africa is meaningless unless it makes a specific contribution to the dialogue between faith and reason, faith and culture, that is, if it strives to take into account the authentic values of African culture. It is understandable why the debate over African theology originated in the Faculty of Theology of Kinshasa from the first years of its creation and why the problem of inculturation as proposed by a critical African theology has always been at the heart of the preoccupations of this Theological School.

The third challenge concerns socio-economic precariousness. Most of the countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have achieved more than fifty years of independence. But their global situation is summarized today by one word: crisis. From almost every point of view, the assessment of the immediate history of this country is catastrophic, with the bankrupt economy, the crazy politics, a dislocated social fabric and a culture changing for the worse.[2] The Special Assembly of the Synod of African Bishops had found the right words to summarize the overall context: "Without any doubt, the common situation is the fact that Africa is saturated with problems: in almost all of our nations, there is appalling destitution, bad administration of available scarce resources, political instability and social disorientation. The result is before our eyes: poverty, wars, despair. In a world controlled by rich and powerful countries, Africa has practically become an appendix without importance, often forgotten and neglected by all."[3] Is it possible to

[2] Cf. KA MANA, *Foi chrétienne, crise africaine et reconstruction de l'Afrique. Défi africain*, Ceta-Clé, Lomé, 1992, p. 35.
[3] *Rapport du cardinal Hyacinthe Thiandoum,* dans *La Documentation Catholiqiue,* no. 2094, May 15, 1994, p. 477.

build a society on armed conflicts, the slaughter of populations, the corruption of the leaders, the theft of common property, the profanation of conscience? The Faculty of the Catholic University of Congo favours reflection in order to propose answers or possible solutions to the questions that provoke our socio-economic and political precariousness.

Linked to the foregoing, the fourth challenge is to be a place of exchange, of mutual knowledge and research on peace. Also, as far as this is concerned, it is about playing a part in reducing the fracture of the country and the continent in order to take on the work of peace. "For the past years, noted the participants of the same Synod of 1994, Africa has been a theater of fratricidal wars that are in the process of decimating populations and destroying their natural resources. Among other causes, these wars originate in tribalism, nepotism, racism, religious intolerance and the thirst for power fed by totalitarian regimes that offend with impunity against the rights and dignity of the person. The populations, tracked down and reduced to silence, undergo, as innocent and resigned victims, all of these situations of injustice."[4]

In other words, when one examines the map of our continent, one can, without pessimism, ask oneself if there is a country capable of saying once and for all that it is in peace, that is, shielded from conflict and violence. Indeed, Africa is traversed by latent or active centres of conflict that generate political instability and socio-economic distress, making this continent one of the most sinister places on the planet. The Democratic Republic of Congo is confronted with a complex and permanent situation of armed conflict with extremely serious consequences: millions of persons raped, displaced, killed, the destruction of the infrastructures of Church and State, fragility of national unity, instability and insecurity, pillage in due form of natural resources, ethnocentric mentality . . . This multi-faceted violence in which our country has sunk for several decades has engendered inhuman conditions for life. Our Faculty favours the encounter between the citizens of diverse provinces of Congo and Africa. It represents a framework where a communitarian spirit can be born and develop, a framework favourable to the interiorization of Gospel values and the verification of these same values through ties of friendship, fraternization,

[4] CHEZA M. (éd.), *Le Synode africain. Histoire et textes*, Paris, Karthala, 1996, proposition 45, p. 260.

solidarity, sharing, mutual support, reciprocal trust over and above the clan or the tribe.

Here, my proposition has been modest. I don't have the pretention of including all the challenges that present themselves to our Faculty and even less to the entire Catholic University of Congo. I have only raised some of those that seem important to me. They are not the only ones.

Educational Objectives of the Faculty

The educational objectives of the Faculty of Theology of Kinshasa are defined in the Statutes of the University, Statutes that take account of the simultaneously special and universal mission of the Congolese Church. Like every other Faculty of Theology of the universal Church, our Faculty wants to contribute to the highlighting and better understanding of the message of revelation by means of a rigorous scientific effort.

Given this goal, the Faculty proposes promoting Sacred Sciences and related disciplines; working for the blossoming of a Theological Science that accepts African socio-cultural values; offering the people of God and their pastors engaged in evangelization and ecumenical effort the necessary help for the comprehension and spread of Christian faith. More concretely, the Faculty pursues the following objectives: assure students of a theological training of the highest level; promote theological research in Africa and assure its publication; maintain the organization of the Theological Weeks of Kinshasa that, since 1994, have been open to the wider public and are devoted to the current problems confronting the Churches of Congo and Africa.

Such objectives indicate clearly that the vision of the founders of this institution was to build, in the heart of Africa, a major School of Theology in order to announce the Gospel for the complete salvation of the African people.

Current Organization of the Faculty

Open to priests, future priests, male and female religious, as well as laypeople, the Faculty of Theology is organized into four sectors or orientations: Biblical, Dogmatic, Moral, and Pastoral. The basic

curriculum extends over two cycles. The first cycle, which comprises three years of *Licence*, aims to provide a general education in the principle theological disciplines with a particular accent on the history and scientific research methods proper to each discipline.

The second cycle (Master) is spread over two years. It is geared toward the in-depth study of the entire theology of one of the aforesaid orientations. The study of themes and special questions, as well as seminars and practical exercises, initiate the student into personal mastery of the scientific methods pertinent to the area of specialization. The examination "De Universa" at the end of the Master cycle permits the student to synthesize all of the knowledge acquired during the five years of theological study.

At the level of the third cycle, students can acquire the following degrees: Advanced Degree of Studies in Theology, Doctor of Theology, and Masters of Education in Theology. As indicated above, the goal is to educate specialists who are capable of assuming the tasks of research and reflection that the future of the Church in Africa requires. It is a matter of training equally specialists destined to teach in the Universities, the Major Seminaries, the Scholasticates, the Catechetical and Pastoral Institutes, and professionals competent in the theological, pastoral and liturgical activities of the clergy and laity at both the diocesan and national levels.[5]

The Centre of the Study of African Religions (CERA)[6] has long been a research department within the Faculty. Placed in the heart of the continent, the Faculty of Theology of Kinshasa still considers its specific vocation to be its contribution to the elaboration of a Christian thought and practice that take into account the spiritual experience of the African people. Given this objective, the CERA represented a place of research with the aim of gaining a better scientific knowledge of both traditional and modern African beliefs and customs. Three years ago, the CERA was merged with the Stefano Kaoze Centre of Research in Ecclesiastical History (CAEK)[7] to form together the CRIPA[8]—the Centre of Interdisciplinary Research on African Patrimony.

[5] Read the Program of Study of the Catholic University of Congo, 2017-2018 Academic year, p. 28.
[6] Centre d'Études des Religions Africaines.
[7] Centre de Recherches en Histoire ecclésiastique Stefano Kaoze.
[8] Centre de Recherches Interdisciplinaires sur le Patrimoine Africain.

On the subject of the teaching and documentation, it is proper to emphasize that our Faculty has always recognized the necessity of following modern scientific requirements. From this perspective, professors and students have at their disposal a library of several thousand books and journals distributed according to the four orientations: biblical, dogmatic, moral, and pastoral. The Dean collaborates with the central library for new orders of books so that the Faculty can continue to satisfactorily fulfil its tasks of theological research and teaching. Efforts are also made to inform the library and make it truly useful for research. The *Revue Africaine de Théologie* and the collections of publications mentioned a bit further in this article equally constitute important tools in the current organization of the Faculty.

Our Faculty depends on hierarchical and statutory authorities of the Catholic University of Congo for its normal functioning: The National Episcopal Conference of Congo (CENCO)[9], the Council of Administration, the Committee of Direction and the Academic Council. As far as its internal organization is concerned, the Faculty of Theology is made up of the following structures and leaders: The Council of Faculty and the Faculty Board composed of the Dean, the Academic Secretary, and the Administrative Secretary.

It is time to examine what the contribution of our Faculty is to the life of our country and Africa in general. What is its impact in Africa today?

Contribution to the Future of Congo and Africa

We can turn to diverse factors to judge the importance or impact of Faculty: its international influence, the soundness and the pertinence of the education it dispenses, the services it renders to the Church and the nation by its research, publications, colloquia, etc.

An Undeniable National and International Influence

First, we must emphasize that the Faculty of Theology of the CUC is open to teachers and students from diverse origins. Indeed, apart from the Congolese of the DR Congo, our Faculty receives Professors from

[9] Conférence Épiscopale Nationale du Congo

Belgium, France, Benin, and Congo Brazzaville, etc., and students from Congo Brazzaville, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Ivory Coast, Angola, Nigeria, Cameroon, Mozambique, Uganda, and Chad, etc. This diversity of nationalities favours the international character of our Faculty's influence. We see there a true reciprocal emulation and enrichment.

Next, this Faculty also receives students who come from the universities of other religious professions, notably Protestant. This is the case of the Protestant University of Congo (PUC) with which we collaborate in the direction of dissertations and theses as well as the organization of colloquia. Such an openness shows the ecumenical character of our Faculty and its concern to educate theologians and pastors in service to the human communities of Congo and other regions of Africa.

Indeed, our Faculty's influence is of equal relevance to pastoral work that occurs in our country and in Africa. Today, more than 60 years after its founding, our institution has already trained more than 4900 graduates, many of whom have become pastoral leaders, priests, bishops, etc. Thus, in an Africa that is favourable to the notion of God and human existence, the priests, military and hospital chaplains trained by our Faculty come into the field as actors capable of accompanying people in their search for God and abundant life. There also exist youth movements created and led by priests trained by the Faculty of Theology of the Catholic University of Congo.

Moreover, the Faculty publishes a scholarly journal named the *Revue Africaine de Théologie* (RAT). It is a biannual journal that appears twice a year. But the Faculty also expresses itself through various Collections: "Semaines théologiques de Kinshasa", "Recherches africaines de Théologie" and "Eglise Africaine en dialogue".

Finally, the Faculty of Theology also exerts influence through its privileged relations of collaboration with the sister Faculties of other Universities: Katholieke Universiteit-Leuven (Belgium), Université Catholique de Louvain (Belgium), Institut Catholique de Paris (France), Université de Fribourg (Switzerland), Institut Catholique de Yaoundé (Cameroon), Université Laval (Quebec, Canada), Université de Montreal (Canada), Institut Catholique de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (ICAO, Abidjan), Catholic University of East Africa (CUEA) in Nairobi, etc. Our cooperation with these universities translates into professorial and even student exchange.

A Theology Attentive to Life

The Faculty of Theology of the CUC is used to affirming that theology has more than simply an academic purpose. It has a public responsibility and its public is not only the University but also the Church and Society at large. In 2007, on the occasion of its golden jubilee, the Faculty of Theology of the Catholic University of Congo had reflected critically on theology's impact on the future of Congolese society and, more widely, on human societies in a globalized world. The main finding arrived at on this occasion is that our Faculty strives to elaborate a theology that is attentive to life.[10] This theology is not purely speculative; it is research attuned to women and men or simply to the environment which it effects. The teachings, publications, themes of various Theological Weeks of Kinshasa illustrate clearly the engagement of this theology with the concrete life of Congo and Africa.[11] This orientation toward a critical African theology that is open to life is inscribed in the profound vision of the founders of this

[10] Read SANTEDI KINKUPU L. (ed.), *La théologie et l'avenir des sociétés. Cinquante ans de l'Ecole de Kinshasa*, Paris, Karthala, 2010, 533 pp.

[11] Among the most significant themes of the Theological Weeks organized at Kinshasa since 1964 we mention the following: *L'Eglise et le monde* (July 5-10, 1965), *Le marriage chrétien en Afrique* (July 20-25, 1965), *La pertinence du christianisme en Afrique* (July 19-23, 1971), *Péché, Pénitence et Réconciliation. Tradition chrétienne et culture africaine* (July 22-27, 1974), *L'évangélisation dans l'Afrique d'aujourd'hui* (July 21-26, 1975), *Pastorale et épanouissement des vocations dans l'Afrique d'aujourd'hui* (July 26-31, 1976), *Les intellectuels Africains et l'Eglise* (July 20-25, 1981), *Ethique chrétienne et société africaine* (April 26-May 2, 1987), *Quelle Eglise pour l'Afrique du troisième millénaire. Contribution au Synode special des évêques pour l'Afrique* (April 21-27, 1991), *Eglise et democratieation en Afrique* (November 21-27, 1993), *L'Education de la jeunesse dans l'Eglise-Famille en Afrique* (November 22-28, 1998), *L'Eucharistie dans l'Eglise-Famille en Afrique à l'aube du troisième millénaire* (March 28-31, 2001), *Repenser le salut chrétien dans le context africain* (March 10-15, 2003), *La théologie et l'avenir des sociétés. Cinquante ans de l'Ecole de Kinshasa* (April 22-28, 2007), *L'Eglise et la promotion de la paix en Afrique. Contribution à la deuxième Assemblée spéciale du Synode des évêques pour l'Afrique* (February 15-21, 2009), *Le Missel romain pour les dioceses du Zaire ; 25 ans après. Bilan, enjeux et perspectives* (May 10-14, 2015), *Christianisme, Rationalités et Destinée de l'Afrique* (April 25-29, 2017), *L'Eglise et al Politique 2019.*

Faculty who have always opted for a theology that is genuinely in service to the Church and society.[12] In this sense, one is not wrong to assert that our Faculty represents a home that trains actors who have an undeniable impact on the social, ecclesial, economic, and even political life in Congo and Africa.

A Solid Theological University Education

Since its founding, the Faculty of Theology of the Catholic University of Congo has been led by a competent academic staff. Among its pioneers, I think about these talented teachers and perceptive researchers. Those who have already left this life are, among others, Professors Alfred Vanneste, Vincent Mulago, François Bontinck, Jacques Saynaeve, Joseph Ntedika, Paul Warmoes, Alphonse Jozef Smet, Léonard Van Baelen, René De Haes, Kombe Oleko, Richard Mugaruka, Edouard Ludiongo, Jean-Adalbert Nyeme Tese. There are also those who God has granted a good long life and who he keeps among us to permit us to continue to benefit from their wisdom and knowledge. This concerns in particular Professors Mgr. Tharcisse Tshibangu, Cardinal Laurent Monsengwo Pasinya, Dosothée Atal Sa Angang, Alphone Ngindu Mushete, Bimwenyi Kweshi, Benezet Bujo, Tshiamalenga Ntumba, Eugène Uzukwu, Ngimbi Nseka, Paul Buetubela, Léon de Saint Moulin. They have shown the influence and fecundity of our Faculty by giving the best of themselves in educating generations of students. They have given to the Church and society women and men steeped in science, knowledge, know-how, social skills and good manners.

In brief, the theological undertaking within our Faculty bears witness to a precise willingness to take into account, in a lucid and rigorous manner, the daily life of the faithful as a place to appropriate the Message. Our theology is interested as much in God as in humans. It is in service to the Church and society; in this way it participates in the revitalization of the African continent.

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[12] In this regard, one can consult the article of the first African Dean of the Faculty of Kinshasa, NTEDIKA Konde J., "La théologie au service des Eglises d'Afrique", in *Revue africaine de théologie* (1977), no. 1, pp. 5-30.

Conclusion

In its Strategic Plan 2017-2022, the Catholic University of Congo emphasizes that it will contribute to the development of the capacities of actors engaged within the Church and society and to influence positive transformations and social mores. It is thus that the education and research in ecclesiastical faculties are more oriented toward the challenges of faith and social values.[13] It is in this context that our Faculty, which is a place of study and reflection on diverse themes, not only theological but also related—that is to say themes not directly tied to theology—contribute to the future of Congo and Africa.

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[13] Consult Consulter UNIVERSITÉ CATHOLIQUE DU CONGO UCC, *Lumen 2022. Plan stratégique 2017-2022*, Kinshasa, Presses de l'Université Catholique du Congo, 2018, p. 34.

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CONTRIBUTIONS OF CATHOLIC THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTIONS TO THE TRANSFORMATION OF AFRICA: THE CASE OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Josée Ngalula, rsa[1]

ABSTRACT

The article presents aspects of the contribution of three Catholic institutes of theological formation of Kinshasa (DR Congo): the faculty of theology of the Catholic University of the Congo, the John XXIII Major Seminary and the Saint Eugene of Mazenod Institute. These three institutions do not limit themselves to armchair theology. Their professorial bodies and students are very attentive to the big challenges of Africa today. That's why they work hard to bring a contribution of quality. They have invented several types of activities open to the general public, activities both scientific, interdisciplinary, intercultural and ecumenical.

Introduction

In 2007, the Theology faculty of the Catholic University of Congo published a collective work titled « *La théologie au service de la société* ».[2] This title recalls a fundamental given of Christian theological identity: the practice of theology in a Christian mode is not at all a withdrawal of Christianity into itself in a form of piety and narcissistic search for salvation. Since it is the "understanding" of a faith in a Triune God communicating freely with the world. Christian theology cannot but turn

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[2] KABASELE Mukenge André (dir.), *La théologie au service de la société*. Kinshasa, FCK, 2007.

to the world that surrounds it, its history and its future. Since it is the discourse and explication of the faith lived by men and women situated in the world and receiving God in their temporal reality, Christian faith cannot but interest itself in everything that touches humans: their challenges, their initiatives, their aspirations. As a result, every theological institution of instruction and research must honestly ask itself about its contribution to the life and transformation of the society that surrounds it.

In the reflections that follow, I am going to dwell on the contribution of the current Catholic theological institutions in the Democratic Republic of Congo, especially in Kinshasa. I will begin by presenting these institutions, after which I will explore, in a subsequent section, the service that they render to society.

Different Types of Catholic Theological Institutions in the Democratic Republic of Congo

There are three types of institutions in the Democratic Republic of Congo that offer theological training within the Catholic Church: Faculties of Theology in Catholic universities, major theological seminaries, as well as theological training institutes for religious. The Catholic Church in the DRC possesses ten major theological seminaries for 47 dioceses, two theological seminaries for the training of religious (Saint Eugène de Mazenod Theologate at Kinshasa and Franciscan Theologate at Kolwezi) as well as two Catholic universities that include a Faculty of Theology: the Catholic University of Congo (CUC) and Saint Augustine University (both in Kinshasa).[3] Note that the other Christian confessions have a different organization concerning their own institutions of theological training.[4]

[3] Cf. *Annuaire de l'Eglise catholique en RD Congo*, edited by the Inter-Diocesan Center, Kinshasa, 2016 and 2017.

[4] Apart from the Catholic Church, there are three types of institutions for theological training: the Faculty of Theology of the Protestant University of Congo (UPC, that comprises the majority of Protestant churches), the Missiological Institute founded by the Pentecostal churches, and private theological institutions belonging to neo-Pentecostal pastors. Here, however, I will concentrate on Catholic institutions.

In the lines that follow, I will limit myself to those long-established Catholic theological institutions in Kinshasa: The Faculty of Theology of the Catholic University of Congo, John XXIII Major Seminary, and the Saint Eugène de Mazenod Institute.[5]

The Catholic University of Congo (CUC) currently includes seven faculties (Theology, Canon Law, Philosophy, Economics and Development, Social Communications, Law, Political Science), one department (Aggregation, teacher preparation programs), one specialized school (CUC School of Management), two observatories (Observatory of Economic Policy and Human Development and the Observatory of Violence and Religious Fundamentalism), and one affiliate institute (Cardinal Martino Pan-African Institute). The Faculty of Theology of the Catholic University of Congo has existed since 1957, three years after the creation of the Lovanium University of Kinshasa. The first graduation of Bachelor's Degrees took place in 1959, and that of the first Doctorates in Theology in 1962. In 1974, the Mobutu regime eliminated the Faculty of Theology in its university of origin. This Faculty became an autonomous institution named the "Faculty of Catholic Theology of Kinshasa". In 1987, the National Bishops' Conference added the "Department of Philosophy and African Religion" which changed the institution into the "Catholic Faculties of Kinshasa". Between 1989 and 2000, other faculties were added to such an extent that the institution finally became the "Catholic University of Congo" (CUC). During the first two decades, all of the students of the Faculty of Theology were future clerics. Then, the religious of both genders as well as lay students not destined for the priesthood were progressively admitted.

One of the fundamental options of this Faculty of Theology is the inculturation of the Gospel by integrating those human sciences that are attentive to the environment and its cultural traditions into theological training. This Faculty of Theology intends to train specialists for the teaching of theology in the universities, major seminaries and scholasticates, as well as staff competent in theological, apostolic, pastoral and liturgical animation in Christian communities and among professed religious. There are four orientations in this Faculty: Biblical, Dogmatic, Moral, and Pastoral. Basic training is extended over two cycles: three years

[5] I am leaving aside the Saint Augustine University of Kinshasa that began by being a Faculty of Philosophy prior to progressively integrating other faculties, including Theology.

of undergraduate studies and two years for the Licentiate. The Licentiate degree program in theology can be completed by that of the Aggregation[6] for secondary education; a degree that enables those who are licensed to teach in high schools. At the level of the third cycle, students can acquire the rank of Master of Advanced Studies in Theology, Doctor in Theology, and Senior Lecturer of higher education in Theology. This faculty is progressively integrating the LMD (licentiate, masters, doctorate) System.

Various research institutions are associated to this Faculty of Theology: the "*Semaines théologiques de Kinshasa*" (interdisciplinary colloquia since 1964), the "*Collection Recherches Africaines de théologie*" (since 1971 and consecrated to works of Biblical, Historical, and Systematic Theology), the "*Collection Église africaine en dialogue*" (since 1975 and consecrated to problems involving current events and religious culture in Africa), and the "*Revue Africaine de Théologie*" (since 1977).

The Major Seminary of the Archdiocese of Kinshasa, Saint John XXIII, was created in 1967. Its charge was to provide for the theological training of seminarians of this Archdiocese (and elsewhere if necessary) with a view toward the priesthood. It consists of two sections of activities and scientific research: the "*Chair of the Blessed John XXIII*" and "the *'Area of Different Perspectives"*".[7] The John XXIII Chair, hosted by local professors, presents current subjects (books or research results) whereas in the *Area of Different Perspectives* seminarians host debates on diverse topics from an interdisciplinary or ecumenical point of view. The John XXIII Major Seminary is affiliated with Faculty of Theology of the Catholic University of Congo. In this framework, the two institutions created jointly a "*Chair of Laurent Cardinal Monsengwo*" in 2015 to widen and popularize the insights of the experts of the *Theological School of Kinshasa* for the public at large.

The Saint Eugène de Mazenod Theologate (ISEM) of Kinshasa was founded in 1982 by the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate for the theological preparation for the priesthood of the male religious congregations working in the Democratic Republic of Congo. This Theologate has been affiliated with the Pontifical Urban University in Rome since 1992. In 1994, the Saint Eugène de Mazenod Institute created

[6] The Agrégation is a competitive examination for civil service in the public education system—Translator's note.

[7] *L'espace Regard Croisé*

and incorporated the *"African Institute of Mission Sciences (IASMI)"* that since then has organized several activities: a *"Cycle of Training for Missionaries*"[8] arriving in the Democratic Republic of Congo or belonging to the DRC, a "*Cycle of Continued Education*"[9] for pastoral agents, the "*Cardinal Malula Chair (CMM)*", and the publication of the "*Revue Africaine des Sciences de la Mission (RASM)*". Since 1995, the Saint Eugène de Mazenod Institute has also published the *Baobab* editions. The Cardinal Malula Chair's objective is to sensitize Christian missionaries and African elites to those current events that raise special questions for the African consciousness. Since the founding of this Chair in 1994, 44 sessions have already been held over various themes, given by nationally as well as internationally renowned specialists.

Let us note that at the Saint Eugène de Mazenod Institute as well as the Faculty of Theology of the Catholic University of Congo, there are no lay people who follow the complete course in theology apart from some religious sent by their congregations to become educators subsequently. One of the reasons for this is the lack of job opportunities for laypeople who have nothing but a diploma in theology.

In the context of ecumenical relations, the Catholic University of Congo, the Saint Eugène de Mazenod Institute, and the John XXIII Major Seminary collaborate with the Faculty of Theology of the Protestant University of Congo by way of professorial exchanges and scientific colloquia. This Protestant University of Congo consists of four faculties: Theology, the Economic Affairs and Sciences Administration, Law, and Medicine.

Some Contributions in the Face of Challenges in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Africa

The development of institutions specifically consecrated to the theological training of future priests and other agents of evangelization generally targets the quality of service rendered by evangelization to society. But the

[8] *Cycle de Formation pour Missionnaires*
[9] *Cycle de Formation Permanente*

Church, in solidarity with the "*joys and the hopes*"[10], does not engage a theology that retreats only into religious problems: she also listens to everything humanity does in order to serve it in all dimensions. And so, besides the academic cursus of theological training, the current theological institutions in Kinshasa have initiated several activities that render veritable service to global society, either directly or indirectly.

I would like to emphasize two types of contribution: the service of living testimony as well as that of intelligence and wisdom.

The Service of Living Testimony

This service is perceivable in the current theological training institutions in Kinshasa faced with two principal challenges: the extraversion of African youth as well as the exploitation of ethnic and religious differences for violent ends.

a) Challenge of an Extroverted Youth and a Voluntary Brain Drain

The universities to which the Faculties of Theology in Kinshasa belong are full of young people preparing their future and that of their entire society. Africa is characterized at present by the scandal of a mass exodus of human resources, especially African youth. As in almost all African countries, the young women and men of Congo dream of leaving for a wealthy country in the West or elsewhere as soon as any occasion presents itself. It is a voluntary brain drain. What can a Faculty of Theology provide in such a situation?

There is first of all the life testimony of members of the Faculty of Theology, the professorial body as well as female and male students. The fact that they are almost all consecrated (priests, male or female religious) situates them in the position of permanent evangelization by their daily behaviour. One of the important elements of this testimony is the great love for this country and this continent that pushes them to consecrate their entire life in order to serve it.

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[10] *Gaudium et Spes* 1, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html

What is more, the majority of the professors of the Faculty of Theology earned their doctorates in Europe and returned thereafter to serve Africa. Today, African youth need witnesses that affirm by their behaviour that this continent is worthy of being loved, that it is worth it to fight from the inside in order to ameliorate the living conditions of its inhabitants.

Because of this living testimony, the presence of a Faculty of Theology where professors and students are a living word of the value to be granted to the African continent is very important. But this presupposes that these witnesses are genuinely happy to be and to serve in Africa, that they do not behave as if they remain in Africa for lack of anything better and that they would also leave at the earliest opportunity!

b) Challenge of Abusive Exploitation of Differences at the Service of Division and Violence

Africa is marked by a very large ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversity that is itself immensely rich. Unfortunately, these differences are regularly exploited by political, economic, and even religious leaders to stir up divisions and violence from which they profit. And an African youth that is at loose ends, disappointed by life without a horizon, allows itself to be easily exploited.

Both the Catholic University of Congo and the Saint Eugène de Mazenod Institute are places where students from the most diverse contexts mix. Already the fact of being in Kinshasa, where all the ethnicities of the Democratic Republic of Congo as well as several nationalities and religions meet, makes these institutions into places where the challenge of good management of ethnic and religious differences is lived daily.

From an ecumenical point of view, the Saint Eugène de Mazenod Institute and the Faculty of Theology of the Catholic University of Congo collaborate with the Protestant University of Congo by means of an exchange of professors through theological courses as well as theological colloquia.

In the last five years, the Saint Eugène de Mazenod Institute, which welcomes international religious congregations, has received 21 religious congregations (masculine and feminine), with female and male students from 15 countries of Africa and Madagascar, and from two Latin American as well as two Asian countries. The spirit of family and Christian fraternity that characterizes the male and female students from these two institutions is among the greatest testimonies that pull students from other faculties and

institutions. In addition to the daily fraternization, activities that value the rich cultural diversity are regularly organized, as for example the "cultural day" once a year.

And it is a true happiness to state that the note that predominates in these two institutions is fraternity between these female and male students who come from such diverse horizons. Despite the negative repercussions from the wars the country has known over ethnic and religious diversity, these two institutions have not experienced ethnic tensions among the student population. And it is a strong testimony, a true contribution to the pacification of the country, by means of a youth that does not allow itself to be swept away by the divisive currents that shake Africa.

It is at this level that we must welcome an ecumenical initiative proceeding from the male and female students of the Saint Eugène de Mazenod Institute: the creation of the "*Panel théologique des étudiants en théologie*" ("*Theological Panel of the Students in Theology*") in 2014. This *Theological Panel* has as its goal to enable the students of all the theological institutions of Kinshasa to meet and socialize in order to bear witness to human and Christian fraternity. In point of fact, several institutions and universities in the Democratic Republic of Congo are characterized by institutional rivalry, especially among students, even to the level of scientific research. First of all, this *Theological Panel* wants to provide another tonality: the richness of the diversity lived in fraternity; it values that institutional, racial, ethnic, and confessional richness. For that purpose, the female and male students of the Saint Eugène de Mazenod Institute, the Faculty of Theology of the Catholic University of Congo, the Faculty of Theology of the Saint Augustine University, the Higher Institute of Religious Pedagogy of Kinshasa, as well as the Faculty of Theology of the Protestant University of Congo meet one day each year to exchange views on a current topic that affects the future of the Church of Africa. Various themes of this *Theological Panel* include: "Famille, où vas-tu ?" (2014), "*Afrique, pourquoi tant de crises?*" (2015), "*Afrique et mondialisation*" (2018).[11]

In an Africa torn apart by conflicts that stir up cultural and religious differences, these students in theology are trying to make an important contribution to the construction of an African society built on the

[11] "Where is the family going" (2014), "Why so many crises, Africa?" (2015), "Africa and globalization" (2018).

promotion of ethnic and religious diversity as an enriching and fulfilling reality, as long as it is well managed through interpersonal encounters that promote a culture of dialogue and complementarity.

The Service of Understanding and Wisdom

One of the responsibilities of the intellectual environment in a country is to offer the service of insight through the fact of approaching crucial questions in depth in order to clarify the present and to provide a positive boost to the future. They also offer the service of wisdom by helping society to have a panoramic view of the problems and to draw the lessons from history. The institutes of theological education in Kinshasa also provide, in their own way, this service of intelligence and wisdom in the face of certain challenges.

First of all, the African continent is still characterized by a massive presence of new religious movements, of which certain ones, calling themselves Christian, convey a "gospel of prosperity". They develop a mercantile relation with the divine and push believers into a permanent fear of evil spirits and sorcerers. They also convey a type of exploitation of the Bible that pushes new converts into a pietism without engaging in social transformation.[12]

Secondly, in a counter-reaction to the shadows of the history of evangelization of Africa as well as the harmful effects of a Christian religion poorly understood and poorly lived on the African continent, certain African environments have perceived Christianity as "destructive" for Africa, to the point of developing an anti-Christian movement, extoling the return of African traditional religions. There is grafted onto it a claim of African originality implying a return to African traditional religions as a way of revaluing the Black race.[13]

In this context, the presence of institutions of theological education in society and the universities is very important, to make their contribution to a rational approach to the Christian faith and its sources. Indeed, the faith

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[12] See for example: *Evangelii gaudium* no. 90; the NATIONAL COUNCIL OF EVANGELICALS OF FRANCE (CNEEF), *LA théologie de la prospérité* ; Paris 2012.

[13] With an intellectual dimension (the khamite movement) and a violent activist dimension (see for example http://www.revolutionafrique.com/eglises-abrutissent-les-africains/)

isn't only sentiment and engagement; it also touches human reason. The fact of proposing quality education to the future agents of evangelization constitutes a worthy contribution, but there is more: the organization of scientific activities touching directly on biblical themes and various domains of Christian faith allows for the development and dissemination of an idea of the Christian religion that is not simple piety, nor destruction of Africa, but rather serves the integral promotion of Africa and the entire world.

As elsewhere in the Catholic Church, the theological institutions of Kinshasa that are oriented primarily toward the education of future priests organize their courses according to directives from Rome. The challenges that are proper to the African continent are, however, taken into account by means of the themes or profound questions introduced in certain courses, especially in the organs of scientific research that touch upon the problems relative to the past and the future of the African continent.

As far as the John XXIII Major Seminary is concerned, we also note an effort at the service of intelligence and wisdom with regard to professors as well as seminarians. Indeed, the "John XXIII Chair" has regularly and publicly dealt with some substantive problems that respond to the challenges explained above. For example: "*Missions catholiques et protestantes face au colonialisme et aux aspirations du peuple autochtone à l'autonomie et à l'indépendance politique au Congo Belge"* (2013) ; *L'Eglise et la société au service de la paix, à la lumière de la pensée des papes Jean XXIII et Jean-Paul II"* (2014). For their part, through «*l'Espace Regard Croisé,"* for example, the seminarians discussed the following subject in 2012: "*Qu'est-ce que la Vérité?" Points de vue de la Philosophie, de la Théologie Protestante et de la Théologie Catholique".*

For its part, the Saint Eugène de Mazenod Intitute made a major contribution to this service of intelligence and wisdom by discussing the crucial problems of Africa through the "*Revue Africaine des Sciences de la Mission"* (RASM) as well as the *Chaire Cardinal Malula."* Besides the publication of the *Cardinal Malula Chair* lectures, the RASM made two major contributions: articles relative to the human and historical sciences in Africa[14], as well as the promotion of African languages by means of

[14] For example, No. 18 on "*L'état des recherches sociologiques en République Démocratique du Congo".*

scientific articles written directly in African languages[15]. But it is especially the *Cardinal Malula Chair* that makes a remarkable contribution by the fact of discussing in depth, and for the public at large, problems relative to the transformation of Africa. For example, in 2013 it discussed the question of the conflicts of the Great Lakes[16]. In a very powerful communication, the Congolese historian and linguist, Isidore Ndaywel,[17] the expert consulted in the recent past by the Congolese government, stigmatized the memory of the violence and vengeance maintained in the region of Rwanda, Burundi, and the DRC. He has advocated a rediscovery of national identity and the assets of power to ensure a lasting and peaceful future, notably a better organization of knowledge. And on the subject of "*Transformation des conflits et construction de la paix"* (2016): The colloquium speakers presented the analytic tools for the prevention and transformation of conflicts, as well as the traditional African resources of conflict resolution.[18]

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[15] Numbers 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, etc. of the RASM.

[16] "*Région des grands lacs: crise, guerre et géopolitique de la renaissance"* (2013).

[17] See his *Histoire générale du Congo : de l'héritage ancien à la République démocratique,* Paris, Bruxelles, De Boeck & Larcier – Département Duculot, 1998.

[18] The following are other themes studied in these colloquia: « *La diaspora africaine et le développement de l'Afrique* « (1998), « *L'anthropologie congolaise: développement et orientations des recherches"* (1999), *« Le fondamentalism »e* (2000), *« Comment renouveler la divilisation africaine ? Repères pour arpenter le XXIe siècle"* (2001), "*La mondialisation et la problématique de l'identité africaine"* (2001), « *La Traversée. L'initiative africaine : les citoyens et les chefs »* (2002, with Eboussi Boulaga), *« La vie à Kinshasa et l'Invisible. Regard d'un anthropologue »* (2004), « *Traite négrière. Responsabilité européennes et africaines"* (2005), "*Vie, démographie et développement en Afrique"* (2005), "*Inculturation, christianisme pluriel et avidité humaine: réflexion sur la globaliisation"* (2006), *« La reconciliation"* (2008), "*Le panafricanisme du 20e siècle: histoire et mémoire:* (2009), "*Congo independent: Panafricanisme et renaissance* (2010), *"Dialogue interreligieux entre civilisations: apport de l'Afrique* (2011), *« La conscience du bien et du male en Egypte. Secret de la puissance des pharaons de l'Egypte ? »* (2017). Notably in the same dynamic, the *Baobab* editions of the Saint Eugène de Mazenod Institute published the following research: "*La guerre est un crime"* (2017), "*Conception africaine du temps et cooperation*

The Faculty of Theology of the Catholic University of Congo has offered this service of insight and wisdom equally through its activities and scientific publications, showing that the Christian religion is not pietistic but is equally characterized by a meaningful emphasis on Africa and the challenges linked to its development. Several important themes are discussed by the "*Semaines théologiques de Kinshasa"* in connection with the challenges mentioned above.[19] We remember especially the theme treated by the colloquium of 2017: "*Christianisme, Rationalités et Destinée de l'Afrique"* that notably discussed the violence in Africa.

On the occasion of its sixtieth anniversary, the Catholic University of Congo organized an international and interdisciplinary colloquium (25-29 April 2017). It made a rigorous evaluation of the past and a prospective of actions capable of impacting in an even more decisive and fruitful manner the Destiny of an Africa confronted by multiple challenges, especially those of religious pluralism, contemporary cultural changes, permanent risks of the reversal of values and religious radicalizations that engender violence. The colloquium proposed several decisive contributions by African universities for an Africa of the future, especially the creation of scientific observatories for these situations that weaken Africa and put a check on its development. [20]

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internationale" (2017), "*Stratégies pour le développement en milieu rural en République Démocratique du Congo"* (2016).

[19] See, for example, some of the themes discussed by the "*Semaines théologiques de Kinshasa" (Theological Weeks o Kinshasa)* in connection with the challenges mentioned above: "*La pertinence du christianisme en Afrique"* (1971), "*Foi chretienne et langage humain"* (1972), "*Justice chrétienne et promotion humaine"* (1979), « *Les intellectuels Africains et l'Eglise »* (1981), «*Ethique chrétienne et société africaine* (1987), «*L'éducation de la jeunesse dans l'Eglise-Famille en Afrique"* (1998), « *Maladie et souffrance en Afrique : l'Eglise interpellée par la pandémie du Sida"* (2005), «*La théologie et l'avenir des sociétés"* (2007), «*L'Eglise et lal promotion de la paix en Afrique »* (2017 and which notably discussed the question of violence in Africa).

[20] There are also several special issues of the "*Revue Africaine de théologie (RAT),"* for example: *"Ecologie et théologie africaine"* (2004), "*Inculturation et libération en Afrique aujourd'hui"* (1990), etc.

Within the same framework, the «*Panel théologique des étudiants en théologie"* popularizes its debates for the entire society by publishing its reflections in the journal "*Bosquet initiatique,"* created in 2007 by the

A Definite Influence on the Development of Society

Like every institution of higher learning, the Catholic University of Congo, the John XXIII Major Seminary and the Saint Eugène de Mazenod Institute influence the proper functioning of Congolese society by educating the country's elite, first by watching over the quality of their education.

The contribution of the Catholic University of Congo is particularly noteworthy. This university contributes to the global development of the Congolese society by the quite active participation of its research organs in all the major public debates of society in order to instill Christian values. In the history of the DR Congo, its Faculty of Philosophy emphasized some fundamental debates for the present and future of the society by means of its colloquia and publications. For example, there is its major contribution to the debates of the 1970s over respect for African culture: President Mobutu had at first announced a national policy of a "*return* to authenticity," in the sense of a blind return to all ancestral practices. It is thanks to the pertinent analyses issued by this Faculty of Philosophy that given the national policy advocated by the president of the Republic, the word "r*eturn*" was finally replaced by "*appeal*" (in the sense of being inspired), to appeal to the experience and wisdom of the ancestors in order to devise pertinent solutions to today's questions. In the same way, today's Faculty of Philosophy influences social debates over the relationship to globalization and ecology.

"The Observatory of Economic Policy and Human Development" of the Catholic University of Congo offers the training of a political and economic elite that is sensitive to the ethical dimension as a special contribution to the development of Congolese society. Functioning since February 2018, "The Observatory of Religious Violence and Fundamentalism" of the Catholic University of Congo will make a specific contribution to the awareness and reflection on the problem of religiously inflected violence in the country and in Africa in general. The *Cardinal Martino Pan-African Institute* of the Catholic University of Congo emphasizes the proper functioning of Congolese society by training Congolese politicians in the Church's social teaching so that care for

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students of the Saint Eugène de Mazenod Institute. For example, the June 2013 issue carried the theme "My Faith as an African," that of November 2015 "The Crises and Conflicts in Africa" and that of June 2016 "The African Church in Its Service of Mercy."

justice and the poor may be present in the major decisions taken by the country.

For its part, the Faculty of Theology of the Catholic University of Congo places a special accent on the approach to inculturation that involves the integration of the social sciences into theological research. To that end, it trains a type of pastoral agent who will integrate the sociocultural and political problems and dynamics with his or her evangelizing activities. The DR Congo is a country where for several decades politicians have wanted to force the population to pray without reflecting, and not to become engaged in changing the unjust structures that check the self-fulfilment of individuals and society at large. The way of understanding the faith-culture and faith-social justice relationship inculcated by this Faculty of Theology in its students as well as the entire Catholic University of Congo is quite influential on the socio-political discourse of the Congolese Episcopate (where a large number of bishops have graduated from this Faculty of Theology).

A fairly high number of professors of the John XXIII Major Seminary and the Saint Eugène de Mazenod Institute come from the Faculty of Theology of the Catholic University of Congo: there, they transmit the options of the Faculty concerning the relationship between the Christian faith and the development of the global society.

Let us note in passing that the Protestant University of the Congo, with whom the Catholic institutions have ecumenical relations, anticipates as its contribution to the global development of Congolese society an ethical dimension in particular. Indeed, it is stated thusly in its Ephemeris:

> Conscious of the fact that the crisis in our country is essentially moral in nature, the Protestant University of Congo places a special accent on the dimension of Christian ethics in order to produce competent scientific operators, inspired by the fear of God and ready to serve the Community in faith and in truth.

Conclusion

In talking about theology's contribution to the Church's evangelizing mission, *Evangelium Gaudium,* no. 133 observes the following:

> A theology—and not simply a pastoral theology—which is in dialogue with other sciences and human experiences is most important for our discernment on how best to bring the Gospel message to different cultural contexts and groups. The Church, in her commitment to evangelization, appreciates and encourages the charism of theologians and their scholarly efforts to advance dialogue with the world's cultures and sciences. I call on theologians to carry out this service as part of the Church's saving mission. In doing so, however, they must always remember that the Church and theology exist to evangelize, and not be content with a desk-bound theology.[21]

We have seen that the Catholic institutions of theological training in Kinshasa are not limited to a "desk-bound theology". And it is precisely this that allows the John XXIII Major Seminary, the Saint Eugène de Mazenod Institute, and Faculty of Theology of the Catholic University of Congo to develop scientific activities rooted in attunement to the challenges facing Africa today in order to serve it better. And this modest service isn't limited to contributions at the level of profound thinking but equally at the level of life testimony, especially of the female and male students in theology.

In an Africa tempted by the instrumentalization of differences in service of violence, we can take note of the ecumenical initiative from a collaboration in the complementarity of Catholic and Protestant institutions, and especially the invention of the "Theological Panel" by the male and female students in theology.

Finally, we note that the presence of those institutions of theological training which are really in service to African societies constitutes a necessity, notably faced with the challenges related in this article. And it is in this way that they will produce those pertinent African theologies for the aspirations of Africa and its inhabitants for their integral salvation.

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[21] http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html

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NIGERIA CERTIFICATE IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULA AND THE SEARCH FOR PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE AMONG CHRISTIANS AND MUSLIMS

Ilesanmi Ajibola.[1]

Abstract

Challenging religious extremism, violence, exclusion and marginalization are now common features in the index of contemporary Nigeria narrative. Among numerous efforts in the search for peaceful interreligious relation in Nigeria is the attainment of "moral and spiritual values in interpersonal and human relations."[2] This objective is one of the goals for the establishment of private and public tertiary schools, including the Colleges of Education (COEs) across the country. The schools are microcosms of the pluriform status of the larger Nigerian society. By their religious education curricula, the Colleges are expected to aid unity among citizens irrespective of religious and ethnic variations. Unfortunately, instances of violence and religious crises within these ivory towers have continued to betray marginal influence of these schools on the religious and social space. Instances of aggressive distrust and suspicion arising from sheer ignorance of others' religious beliefs and practices are evident especially among Christians and Muslim youths in the schools. The same mindset is passed on to younger generations in primary and secondary schools where the teachers-in-training (COEs' students) are meant to work. This essay argues that the bulk of these strained relationships rest on the confessional-centric curricula of religious education in the country. It presents Islamic and Christian Religious Studies curricula in Nigeria's COEs as case study,

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[2] Federal Republic of Nigeria. *Nigeria Certificate in Education Minimum Standards for Arts and Social Sciences Education*. "Philosophy and goals of education in Nigeria." Abuja: National Commission for Colleges of Education. 1(9) c, 2012a.

and argues for a need to refocus the curricula for a future of robust dialogue and peaceful co-existence in the country. It recommends an emphasis on inclusive religious pluralism in the index of the country's development factors through a review of the current religious education curricula operative in Nigeria's COEs

Keywords: Nigeria Colleges of Education, Religious Studies Curricula, Nigeria, Peace Culture

Introduction

Of recent, parts of Nigeria have been besieged by violent attacks from suspected herdsmen and *Boko Haram* insurgents. The effects of this violence and the continued attacks by the perpetrators have kept Nigerians on edge. Citizens are no longer able to sleep with their eyes closed because of possible attacks or reprisals and violence in parts of the country.[3] The problem of religious extremism, violence, exclusion and marginalization are now so prevalent in the country and tend to sour the cordial relationship that ought to exist among the various religious adherents that are compatriots. Yet, the constitution and people of Nigeria have the common vision and desire to build a united, virile, and just society[4] that is based on respect for fundamental rights of all, irrespective of religious affiliations.[5] By this understanding, the goal of the Nigerian *Constitution* and, by the same token, the *National Policy on Education*, is for citizens to live in a

[3] For details of recent attacks of people, villages and towns by suspected herdsmen *see* Henry Umoru, Emman Ovuakporie, Johnbosco Agbakwuru, Joseph Erunke, Dapo Akinrefon, Ugochukwu Alaribe & Chimaobi Nwaiwu, "Fulani Herdsmen: Attacks threaten Nigeria's existence." *Vanguard Newspaper.* 27 April, 2016. https://www.vanguardngr.com/2016/04/fulani-herdsmen-attacks-threaten-nigerias-existence-nass/ (accessed 1/5/2018).

[4] Federal Republic of Nigeria, *National Policy on Education*. 6th ed. (Lagos: NERDC Press, 2013), 1. https://issuu.com/esspin/docs/national_policy_on_education (accessed 1/5/2018).

[5] Federal Republic of Nigeria, "Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria" (1999), http://www.icnl.org/research/library/files/Nigeria/constitution2.pdf. (1/5/2018).

peaceful atmosphere and religious freedom. The means to attain this goal through the curricula of Christian Religious Studies (henceforth CRS), and Islamic Studies (henceforth ISS)[6] is the focus of this essay. Both religious education curricula in Colleges of Education (henceforth COEs) in Nigeria shall be examined to reveal their potentials for interreligious peace in the country. Subsequently, suggestions on the way forward toward a profound peaceful interreligious culture in Nigeria's colleges of education shall be made.

Religion, Violence and the Nigerian Society: A need for profound Religious Dialogue

Nigeria occupies a significant socio-economic position in the affairs of sub-Saharan Africa. It is strategic to the political stability of the region and enjoys a huge population with the presence of multiple religions. Although the religious population of the country is not reflected in the nation's official census figures it is safe to note that the religious population of Nigeria is asymmetrically spread between Christians, Muslims, and indigenous religion adherents.

The relationship between governance and the practice of religion since Nigeria's political independence in 1960 is best described as "secularity."[7] Despite the secular status of the nation, it is often quite easy to blur the distinction between religion and politics in the affairs and governance of the country. For instance, government at various levels in the country sponsors religious activities and approves the inclusion of the study of religion in government schools. However, while accommodation of each other's religious presence is part of Nigeria's national ethics as

[6] "CRS" and "ISS" are the designations by which Christian Religious Studies and Islamic Religious Studies are identified in the minimum standard for Nigeria Colleges of Education.

7 The word "secularity" is not used in any part of Nigeria Constitution, the term is used here to refer to a non-preferential recognition of any particular religion by the Constitution of the Federal Republic. The use of the word is apt as it captures the sense of relevant parts of the Constitution which emphasize freedom of worship and religious expression without preference for any religion in the country. Cf. *Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria*, Section 38, par. 1-4.

enshrined in the constitution, political manipulation of religion has led to several instances of unrest and violence in the country. The most recent of these is the *Boko haram* insurgency which attempts to establish a religious force within the Nigerian political space using religious wiles.[8]

In Nigeria, active inter-religious cooperation on issues of common interest has been used as motivation for development.[9] Conversely, continuous mutual suspicion between Muslims and Christians in the country has also been the major albatross to national integration and unity. Because of the close connection between religious belonging and ethnic affinity in the country, distinction between ethnic crises and religious conflicts has often been difficult to make. Whereas the crises are seemingly ethnic, most of the time they quickly acquire a religious garb. Examples of such instances are well documented in Jan Boer's *Nigeria's Decades of Blood: 1980 – 2002,* and Van Gorder's *Violence in God's Name* respectively. Both authors took stock of constant tense moments that have continued to mark the relationship between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. Whatever portrait is used to describe the religious *cum* political crises in the country, crises have unfortunately continued to characterise every aspect of the nation's life. The Christian-Muslim relationship in Nigeria is enmeshed in unhealthy rivalry that is largely informed by political manipulations and quest to control Nigeria's apparatus of governance.[10] The situation has continued to keep the country in tension; and the moments of peace are only mere transient toleration of one another.

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[8] *See* BBC report on "Who are Nigeria's Boko Haram Islamist group?" http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13809501 (Accessed 1/5/2018).

[9] For instance, Christian and Muslim clerics uniting to fight against corruption in the country, *see* Sunday Oguntola, "Christian, Muslims clerics unites against corruption." *The Nation* Newspapers. (July 16, 2017). http://thenationonlineng.net/christian-muslim-clerics-unite-corruption/ (Accessed 1/5/2018). *see also* Matthew Cortina, "Christians, Muslims Unite to Fight Terror Group Boko Haram in Nigeria." https://www.christianpost.com/news/christians-muslims-unite-to-fight-terror-group-boko-haram-in-nigeria-67299/ (Accessed 1/5/2018).

[10] In one single comprehensive work, Falola's *Violence in Nigeria: The Crisis of Religious Politics and Secular Ideologies* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 1998) captures a wide spread of literature comprising varied views on the relation of religion to various aspects of the Nigeria polity.

One of the means by which the government intends to reinvent the peace culture in the country is the education sector.

Religious Education Curricula and the Search for peaceful Coexistence in Nigeria

The Nigerian constitution expresses an overt desire for Nigerians to live in peace and unity despite the multi-ethnic and multi religious composition of the nation.[11] Similarly, the nation's National Policy on Education (NPE) reiterates the same ideal, and proposes the education sector as a viable means to build a "united, virile, and just society."[12] The policy considers the nation's learning centres and religious courses offered in such institutions as avenues to achieve the set goals for peaceful co-existence and unity of all citizens. Unfortunately, these goals have remained unrealizable. The religious education curricula operative in the country are designed to promote religious doctrines and beliefs. They are mostly confessional in content and generally localized in context.

Aisha Lemu, a member of the Islamic Studies Panel set up by the Nigerian Educational Research Council to revise the national Islamic curriculum for different school levels says, "the current Islamic religious education syllabus was drafted on the principle of what a young Muslim should know about Islam in order to live as a Muslim when he leaves school."[13] She acknowledged that "the way of teaching Islam and Christianity in Nigeria is expected to be confessional, that is, students are

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[11] Cf. Federal Republic of Nigeria, "Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria" (1999), http://www.icnl.org/research/library/files/Nigeria/constitution2.pdf. (accessed January 20, 2016).

[12] Federal Republic of Nigeria, *National Policy on Education*. 6th ed. (Lagos: NERDC Press, 2013), 1. https://issuu.com/esspin/docs/national_policy_on_education (accessed 26 September 2016.)

[13] Aisha Lemu, "Teaching for Tolerance in Nigeria," in *Teaching for Tolerance in Muslim Majority Societies*, ed. Recep Kaymakcan and Oddbjorn Leirvik (Suleymaniye - Istanbul: Center for values education (DEM) Press, 2007):222. *See also* www.ncce.edu.ng for the Islamic Studies curriculum approved by NCCE for Colleges of Education in Nigeria.

taught how to practice their religion as well as being taught about their religion."[14] Thus, neither the Christian Religious Studies (CRS) syllabus nor the Islamic Studies (ISS) syllabus has separate sections that deal with interreligious relations. According to Lemu, the syllabi were not specifically designed for such matters; they do not particularly aim at peaceful interreligious coexistence.[15] Both syllabi are highly flavoured with evangelization spices[16] with much emphasis on doctrines and moral teachings.[17]

The Nature and Theology of the Current NCE CRS and ISS Curricula

The Christian Religious Studies Curriculum

The curriculum of the CRS program in Nigeria's Colleges of Education (COEs) is approved by the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) as the minimum standard for the award of the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) nationwide. Students who registered for CRS in any of the Colleges are expected to take compulsory ten credits in the first year with five elective credits. In the second year they are to take twelve credits with an optional three credits, and a compulsory seven credits in the final year excluding the writing of a research work combined with a semester-long teaching practice. Of the thirty available courses for the program, there are only four courses that have the potential to introduce students to the existence of other religions. Two of those courses that involve an exclusive introduction to the content of the religions are, however, made optional for the students.

The philosophy and objectives of the program hinge on,

> the production of teachers who possesses full awareness of God's relationship with man and whose personal character and discipline reflect authentic Christian values and virtues, such that they will be

[14] Lemu, "Teaching for Tolerance in Nigeria." 230-232.

[15] Ibid., 223

[16] Ibid., 227

[17] Ibid.

> able to function effectively as custodian of sound moral and spiritual qualities, particularly in their interaction with young learners in the basic schools.[18]

The philosophy and objectives of CRS as cited above present three distinctive understanding of principles that are expected to guide the theological disposition of both the CRS teachers and the teachers in making;

1. full awareness of God's relationship with man
2. personal character and discipline that reflect authentic Christian values and virtues
3. effective custodian of sound moral and spiritual qualities.[19]

While details of the curriculum do not spell out precisely what "full awareness of God's relationship with man" means, the personal character and discipline expected are unequivocally anticipated to be Christian oriented. In like manner, the authentic Christian values and virtues are expected to be well guarded and transmitted to the younger generation. The understanding of the first point is significant to the extent that it is a hub on which the other two points rotate. In other words, the Christian discipline, virtues and values of which the teacher is expected to be a custodian, revolve around what he or she understands God's relationship with man ought to be.

Islamic Studies (ISS) Curriculum

Like the CRS, the ISS curriculum is approved by the National Commission for Colleges of Education for use in Nigeria's COEs.[20] Qualifying students are expected to be awarded the Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) at the end of the three-year program. The minimum standard of ISS identifies

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*18 *See* Federal Republic of Nigeria, *Nigeria Certificate in Education Minimum Standards for Arts and Social Sciences Education*, 2012. 1

[19] Ibid.

[20] *See* Joseph Ilori, *Philosophy of Christian Education*. (Kaduna: Baraka Press and Publishers Limited, 2002) 13 - 23.

the philosophy of the course to be "directed towards the development of a balanced personality that is socially accommodating, intellectually alert, morally sound and spiritually dedicated to the cause of Allah."[21] It further states, "as a religious study, the focus is towards the achievement of social solidarity, ethical harmony, human equality and brotherhood in the society, particularly the Nigerian society."[22] The objectives of the program are as follows:

1. To acquaint the students with the broad outlines of Islam.
2. To prepare the students to understand Islam as a culture and civilization.
3. To provide high-quality training to enable graduates make rigorous and scholarly approach to the contemporary problems of the Muslim community with particular reference to Nigeria.
4. To instill in the students the spirit of God consciousness, to lead them to appreciate and uphold the values and teachings of Islam, and to live by it.
5. To adequately prepare students to teach at the basic education level
6. To give the students adequate intellectual exposure that will enable them pursue further education in Islamic studies particularly at the B.Ed degree level.[23]

While a focus on "the achievement of social solidarity, ethical harmony, human equality and brotherhood in the society, particularly the Nigerian society," is laudable, details of the curriculum betray an exclusive religious content which brackets other religious adherents out of its consideration. Out of the 30 compulsory credits and two elective courses required for graduation, it is only a single one-credit course (ISS 323),[24] "Comparative Religious Studies," that has anything whatsoever to do with other religions

[21] Federal Republic of Nigeria, *Nigeria Certificate in Education Minimum Standards for Arts and Social Sciences Education*, 21.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid., 21

[24] This code is used for identification purposes in the NCCE minimum standard for Arts and Social Sciences in Nigerian Colleges of Education. "ISS" refers to the course of study, that is, Islamic Studies. The figures signify the year, the semester and the course identifier number respectively.

outside Islam. It is a comparative study of the origins of Islam, Christianity, Judaism, and African traditional religion. The course considers God in Islam, in Christianity, in Judaism and in African traditional religion. The life and works of Jesus Christ from the Islamic point of view as well as belief of the Muslims on Jesus Christ compared with that of the Christians constitute parts of the course. Furthermore, the course also covers the theme of atonement/Original sin, capital punishment in the Bible and crucifixion/resurrection. The course closes with a topic on the causes of misunderstanding and conflicts among the various religions/groups in Nigeria and possible solution to them.[25]

An understanding of God as evident in the details of both CRS and ISS curriculum betrays a considerable sympathy to God's relationship with human beings through their respective religions. Christianity becomes the prism through which God's relationship with human beings is accessible, and the same goes for Islam. While Christian religious educators are expected to be civil in their relationship with other human beings, the inclusive theology which underscores "all efforts and processes which help to bring children and adults into a vitality and saving experience of God revealed in Christ,"[26] is not lost on the overall sense of the CRS program.

To the Muslim, "Islam is also a comprehensive religion that pervades all aspects of man's life including matters of faith and practical living."[27] Islam is one of the religions that enjoys a widespread religious presence across the globe. The religion stands against any consideration of any other religion as equal. Again, like Christianity, the Islamic attitude to interreligious dialogue would only at best be inclusive in nature.[28] Hence, the religious education offered in COEs, in both ISS and CRS, are potentially set on an exclusive theology (at best inclusive theology).

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[25] Federal Republic of Nigeria, *Nigeria Certificate in Education Minimum Standards for Arts and Social Sciences Education*, 32

26 Federal Republic of Nigeria, *National Policy on Education*. 102.

[27] Federal Republic of Nigeria, *Nigeria Certificate in Education Minimum Standards for Arts and Social Sciences Education*, 21.

[28] Inclusivism is one of the three main descriptions used in this essay to describe various interreligious attitudes and theology of religions. The other two are pluralism and exclusivism. While inclusivism recognizes the important place of other religions and include such religion in their structure of salvation, exclusivism closes any such door of recognition. Pluralism considers all religion as lawful and valid ways to salvation.

Performance Assessment of COEs religious Curricula for peaceful Coexistence in Nigeria

As stated earlier, Nigeria's philosophy of education is partly based on the belief that education is an instrument for national development and social change.[29] It further holds education to be vital to the promotion of a progressive and united Nigeria.[30] Consequently, educational programs offered during formal education are expected to address the national goal of a united Nigeria. The philosophy and objectives of religious education in COEs are implicitly expected to replicate the principles of the national goals which anticipate a free society, that is democratic in governance where the rule of law operates, and people are treated as equals irrespective of ethnic, linguistic, or religious affiliation.[31] These goals are high in standard and necessarily warrant a consciousness and mental disposition that resonate with such expectations. It is therefore understandable that the National Policy on Education (NPE) categorically stated that the quality of instruction at all levels of education shall be oriented toward inculcating certain values that are carefully crafted to attain certain set objectives:

a. respect for the worth and dignity of the individual
b. faith in man's [sic] ability to make rational decisions;
c. moral and spiritual principles in interpersonal and human relations;
d. shared responsibility for the common good of society;
e. promotion of the physical, emotional and psychological development of all children; and
f. acquisition of functional skills and competencies necessary for self-reliance.[32]

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29 Federal Republic of Nigeria, *National Policy on Education*. Sec. 1 par. 3a

30 Ibid., Sec. 1 par. 3b

31 Ibid., Sec. 1 par. 5

32 Ibid., Sec. 1 par. 9

These objectives are expected to positively influence the life and attitude of the trained teacher. C. O. Nwana has attempted a classification of the objectives into three broad categories which span over cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains of learning. By his classification, "the inculcation of national consciousness and unity," "inculcation of right values and attitudes," and the "training of the mind in understanding the world," as laid out in the National Policy on Education, fall within the affective behavioural domain.[33] According to the study of Eleanor Pierre and John Oughton, "values and attitudes are rooted in belief systems, which are built on cultural, religious and moral learning." [34] Thus, the teaching and learning of ISS and CRS in COEs have the potential for attitudinal change for peace culture if they are well planned and implemented.

Details of the philosophy of religious education in COEs as contained in the minimum standard for arts and social sciences education aim at inculcating and sustaining moral and spiritual principles in interpersonal and human relations. For example, the philosophy of CRS aims at providing "moral and spiritual values requisite for smooth and stable interpersonal and human relations,"[35] while that of ISS is directed "towards the development of a balanced personality that is socially accommodating, intellectually alert, morally sound, and spiritually dedicated to the cause of Allah."[36] In other words, both CRS and ISS position themselves as midwives to moral and spiritual delivery in government efforts to mediate development via education, but neither the philosophy and objectives of CRS, nor the objectives and philosophy of ISS in COEs' minimum standard have the goal of unity and national integration on its agenda. While ISS mentioned its intended focus on achievement of social solidarity

33 O. C. Nwana. "Relevance of the Aims and Objectives of Nigerian Education to National Development." In Vision and Mission of Education in Nigeria: The Challenges of the 21st Century, edited by Kabiru Isyaku, M.A.G Akale, Alex A Maiyanga, and Modupe Olokun. (Kaduna: National Commission for Colleges of Education, 1998) 18.

34 Eleanor Pierre and John Oughton. "The Affective Domain: Undiscovered Country." *College Quarterly* 10, no. 4 (2007). 4

35 Federal Republic of Nigeria, *Nigeria Certificate in Education Minimum Standards for Arts and Social Sciences Education*, 2012. 1

36 Ibid., 21

particularly in the Nigerian society, the contents of the curriculum have little or nothing to facilitate such fraternity.

Furthermore, it is worthy of note that while the ISS education philosophy is partly focused on "the achievement of social solidarity, ethical harmony, human equality, and brotherhood in the society, particularly in the Nigerian society," one of its objectives is "to prepare the students to understand Islam as a culture and civilization."[37] This requirement places Islam at par with Nigeria as an entity. Such attempt could degenerate into superimposing a subculture on the collective social contract expressed in the constitution. The same *Minimum Standard for Arts and Social Sciences Education* further requires "instilling in the students the spirit of God consciousness, to lead them to appreciate and uphold the values and teachings of Islam, and to live by it."[38] These ideals in themselves are good and project the desire of the curriculum designers to pass on to the students teachings that would acquaint them with the "broad outlines of Islam."[39] Nevertheless, the existence of people of other religions and their stake in the Nigerian project are not well ventilated.

Similarly, whereas the philosophy of CRS aims at correlating CRS with "smooth and stable interpersonal and human relations"[40] in the country, its objectives are aimed at grooming students to "demonstrate sound knowledge and appreciation of the moral values needed to live as a Christian at the various stages of growth and development."[41] The curriculum hopes to produce students that will "express accurate knowledge of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit needed to live as a Christian in the community."[42] It is right to identify with one's religion and project objectives that would help guard and guide the teacher in living religiously in the society. Nevertheless, the CRS and ISS curricula are overly inward looking with less consideration for national goals on unity and integration of all citizens. If well implemented, both curricula of CRS

[37] Federal Republic of Nigeria, *Nigeria Certificate in Education Minimum Standards for Arts and Social Sciences Education*. 21

[38] Ibid.

[39] Ibid.

40 Ibid., 1

[41] Ibid.

42 Ibid., 1

and ISS are sure to transmit unflinchingly the torch of their various faiths, irrespective of the religious views and affiliations of other Nigerians. By these facts, ISS and CRS in COEs do not adequately promote the ideals of the government's interest in unity and integration of all citizens, irrespective of ethnicity and religious affiliation.

Religious education in Nigeria's COEs may be said to have a role to play in the attainment of the national goals, but its focus on national integration is at best contingent on the dictates of the creeds of Islam and Christianity. Both religions that have distinctive recognition in Nigeria's COEs are primarily concerned with inculcating values by which their respective adherents may define their religious location within the larger Nigerian society.

While concepts as values and attitudes to which CRS and ISS subscribe may be difficult to define when considered on a larger scale of operation in a country as multidimensional as Nigeria, one cannot help but ask the place of a faith-based religious education curriculum in a multi-religious society as Nigeria. This is especially so when one considers the fact that doctrinal emphasis of one religion differs from that of another. Thus, when an ISS student is groomed with an understanding that Islam is a "culture and civilization," and likewise the CRS student, what is instilled is a disposition that excludes the religious other from the definition of religion and civilization.

One must be quick to note that religious differences in any given society, including Nigeria, are welcome and healthy developments. It follows therefore that derogatory comments which relegate other religions to an inferior status, may degenerate into fallacious stereotyping of those religions. Crass lack of knowledge of the other's religion, and unwilling attitude to learn about others' religion could get increasingly difficult to modify by means of structured religious educational platforms as the current religious studies curricula of COEs. In the same way, teaching of social values from the point of view of a particular religion independent of other variables that are contingent on the existence of the wider society, may hinder openness and social integration. In this regard, Nwana aptly observes that the teaching of precepts, which has been the tradition of most religious educational interventions, has not had the desired impact in contributing to the promotion of the right values and attitudes in the

Nigerian community.[43] The current religious curricula of COEs cannot, in their present form, contribute to the acquisition of knowledge about the other's religion. To correct this, Nwana recommends a reorganization of the educational system to employ "example" as strategy in achieving the national education objectives.[44] While a blend of the affective and the psychomotor domains of learning needs to be emphasized, as Nwana suggests, a cognitive and affective perusal of the interreligious themes of the religions to which the students are exposed need to be explored for better hands-on interaction.

Potentials of the Current Religious Education Curricula in COEs for Peaceful Coexistence

The NCCE religious education curricula as observed in preceding paragraphs are confessional in nature with flaccid inclusive religious dialogical theology. They are almost exclusive in nature except for pockets of other religious presence with elective status, and one course on introduction to other religions in CRS, and only one compulsory course on comparative studies in ISS. Among the specific objectives, religious study curricula expect graduating students to imbibe religious values and spirituality through which the younger generation in elementary and secondary schools are to be guided. The religious studies curricula of ISS and CRS do not sufficiently offer students any opportunity to significantly learn about other religions, especially in ways that could promote interreligious dialogue and peaceful coexistence. Both curricula lack

43 Such teachings are transmitted in the popular subjects called moral instruction, religious instruction and so on, and are prominent in the tradition of preaching in churches and mosques. Despite the prominence of the instructions in religious circles, Nwana said that it is difficult to say in view of the obvious general adverse behaviour, that precept interventions of schools and colleges as well as those of the churches and mosques are yielding the desired positive intent. Cf. Nwana, "Relevance of the Aims and Objectives of Nigerian Education to National Development."

44 Nwana, "Relevance of the Aims and Objectives of Nigerian Education to National Development." 19.

potentials for good relational knowledge to engage adherents of other religions. Thus, Byimui Umaru argues,

> the curriculum for Islamic/Christian religious knowledge in both primary and secondary schools is exclusively Islamic or Christian with no interreligious knowledge…; in most cases the formation is religiously stereotyped or without reference to the other. The method of imparting knowledge in the Qur'anic schools and Christian Sunday schools excludes even the basic tenets of the other faith tradition. Hence, it can be said that the so-called religious unrest in northern Nigeria is partly due to ignorance about other faiths and the spiritual values that Christianity and Islam have in common.[45]

The current CRS/ISS curricula, like those observed by Umaru, do not possess the potential to effect any significant interreligious engagement that could facilitate religious harmony and promote peaceful co-existence in the country. This argument is further strengthened by the fact that basic curricula requirements for religious dialogue as outlined by Adam Lefstein are significantly missing in both the CRS and ISS curricula.[46]

According to Lefstein, five core aspects are common to most theories of dialogue in the study of religions in schools.[47] These core aspects include: dialogue as a communicative pattern, dialogue as a means of learning, dialogue as an epistemological stance, dialogue as an orientation toward content and, dialogue as a relation.[48] The NCE religious study curricula as discussed in previous sections of this essay do not provide an encouraging opportunity to engage other religions in ways that will advance dialogue as a communicative pattern, or as a means of learning. The knowledge of the CRS students about other religions, for example, are limited to the compulsory exposition to other religions as offered in the introductory course on the study of religion. Notably, the introductory

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45 Thaddeus Byimui Umaru, *Christian-Muslim Dialogue in Northern Nigeria: A Socio-Political and Theological Consideration* (Bloomington IN: Xlibris Corporation, 2013), 205

46 *See* Adam Lefstein, "Dialogue in Schools: Towards a Pragmatic Approach," *Working Papers in Urban Language & Literacies* (London, 2006).

47 Ibid.

48 Ibid.

course has thirteen topics, eight on world religions and five on religion and its relationship with culture and politics. The ISS is no better as it has only a single course where certain themes in Christian theology are compared with Islam and Judaism. These thematic walk-throughs of religion at NCE level of study only expose the students to the knowledge of such religions without adequate interaction for further engagement. As such, the curriculum lacks modal content through which students may be trained in practical terms to relate with other religions.

In line with Lefstein's submission that with the right curriculum and strategies the school could provide a dialogical ideal condition that could positively facilitate dialogue in any given community, [49] the COEs remain explorable platform for the reinvention of peace culture in the country. Unfortunately, the structure and details of the religious education curricula are overladen with themes and topics that limit the orientation of the students to particular religious ideas of virtue and morality. The religious educator and the student-teacher, as well as the targeted elementary and secondary school students are expected to operate within the confines of particular religious tenets. While this disposition has the advantage of establishing a clear religious identity for both the educator, the student teacher, and the end target, such curricula are weak in projecting other religions as equal religious partners in the human search for God, and in maintaining peaceful coexistence in the country. They neither encourage the religious educator to be enthusiastic in learning about other religions, nor embolden the students to academically engage other religions in ways that would challenge them to inquire further. Since dialogue in the school environment according to Lefstein entails "a back-and-forth movement, between my own and the Other's horizons,"[50] any distance created by religious curriculum from one's prejudice, as the NCE religious studies curricula seem to be doing, would only suspend the prejudice, making the individuals involved to be only "'politely listening,' but not truly engaged."[51]

Religious education must be distinguished from what McCabe refers to as "catechesis which promotes personal adherence to Christ, and growth

49 Ibid., 7 - 10

50 Ibid., 4

51 Ibid.

in Christian life."[52] Rather it is a religious education "which is not just a neutral study of comparative religions, but which makes the school a true laboratory of culture and humanity in which the significant contribution of Christianity … is recognized."[53] Although McCabe argues from a Christian perspective, his position is valid for a religious education that is rich in strengthening students' religious identity while being open to learn from others and recognizing them in their own terms. The current religious education curricula in COEs do not have the capacity to do these.

On the other hand, inclusive religious pluralism which navigates a delicate balance between inclusivism and pluralism gives positive recognition to plurality of religions in a society. While religious pluralism upholds equal rights of all religions and rejects any absolute claim of religious truth by any particular religion, religious inclusivism (with reference to Christianity) delineates "lines between the Christian faith and the interreligious dynamism of the other faiths."[54] It sets the parameters within which particular religions may be considered normative. To Alan Race, inclusivism is "both an acceptance and a rejection of the other faiths, a dialectical 'yes' and 'no.'"[55] Inclusive pluralism on the other hand is a consensus that projects plurality without opposing commitment to one's faith.

Inclusive Religious Pluralism: Theological Justification

Inclusive religious pluralism strikes a delicate balance between inclusivism and pluralism. An inclusive pluralism in contemporary Nigeria is theologically justified on the basis of Nigeria' socio-religious realities. The

52 Paul McCabe, "Intercultural Dialogue in Catholic Schools: A Study Guide for Use by NSW Catholic Schools" (Diocese of Armidale, 2014). 2

53 Ibid.

54 Cf. Alan Race, *Christians and Religious Pluralism: Patterns in the Christian Theology of Religions* (London: SCM Press, 1982) 38. According to him, the model accepts the spiritual power and depth manifested in other religions, so that "they can properly be called a locus of divine presence," while it also rejects other religions as not being sufficient for salvation apart from Christ, for Christ alone is Savior."

55 Race, *Christians and Religious Pluralism,* 38

multiplicity of religious presence and the differences in language and cultural affiliations in the country are being overtaken by the continuous need for integration and unity among citizens. Section 38 of the Nigerian Constitution emphasizes "freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, including freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance."[56]

Until recent times, the Christian theology of religions has been predominantly exclusive in doctrine and practice and belittles the views of other religions. Much of the exclusive attitude towards other religions have changed with globalization and increased contacts with other cultures and religious traditions. Significantly, Christian denominations are becoming more respectful of the religious others. The Second Vatican Council opened avenues for a more soteriologically inclusive relationship with other "non-Christian" religions. Yet, beyond the acknowledgment of religious plurality and the readiness to encourage an inclusive religious stance in Christian theology of religion, more could be done in terms of inclusive pluralism.

Inclusive religious pluralism holds in tandem religious pluralism and an inclusive soteriology. For instance, in *Nostra Aetate,* the Catholic church recognizes and does not reject what is true and holy in other religions.[57] This is an example of an inclusive theology which validates the values of others' religious potentials in Christ, the "sign of God's all-embracing love" and the "fountain from which every grace flows."[58] The acceptance of these other religions is on the basis of their precept and teachings that reflects "a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men."[59] The recognition of religious pluralism, but with restraint on the full soteriological potential of the other religions falls short of what the religion of the other means to them. In a country like Nigeria where the struggle for religious supremacy rages, an inclusive religious attitude needs to be

[56] Federal Republic of Nigeria, "Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria." Sec. 38, Art. (1).
[57] Pope Paul VI, "Nostra Aetate: Declaration on the Relation of the Church with Non-Christian Religions." #2
[58] Pope Paul VI. #4
[59] Pope Paul VI. #2

modulated to accommodate the salvific validity of others' religious traditions.

In Nigeria where Islam and Christianity have introduced division in homes, families and the country along religious lines, inclusive religious pluralism remains the most appropriate theology for interreligious dialogue. Its scope accommodates the salvation of adherents of other religions while admonishing loyalty to one's religious convictions.

Relevance of Inclusive Religious Pluralism in Nigeria's Search for Peaceful Coexistence

Considering the deficiencies of the CRS and ISS curricula for peace building among Christians and Muslims in Nigeria, inclusive religious pluralism is suggested as a way forward. Nigeria, like many other religiously and ethnically diversified nations, requires a kind of education which Martha Nussbaum describes as "an education based on the idea of an inclusive global citizenship and on the possibilities of the compassionate imagination" that "has the potential to transcend divisions created by distance, cultural difference, and mistrust."[60] Reaping the benefits of diversity has continued to elude Nigeria. There have been many instances, in recent history, of religious tension and crises arising from distrust and mutual suspicion between religious adherents. To change such disheartening situation, the suggestion of Nussbaum is most appropriate: A diverse society with multi ethnic and multi religious presence requires an education that is characterized by "critical thinking, ability to bridge and understand different cultures and religions, and the ability to imagine the situation of others and sympathize actively with them."[61] These categories reflect the basic ingredients of an inclusive religious pluralism.

Considered from the point of view of the religious studies educator, inclusive pluralism keeps the religious location of the teacher (and in fact, that of the student) intact. The religious beliefs and practices of an

[60] Martha Nussbaum. "Liberal Education and Global Community." Liberal Education 90 (1): 42–47. 2004.

[61] Martha Nussbaum' *Cultivating Humanities: A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education,* quoted in Reza Fakhari, "Educating for Religious Pluralism and Inclusive Citizenship," *Diversity and Democracy,* Vol. 18, No. 3, 2015.

inclusivist pluralist are not sacrificed in the process of engaging other religious traditions. Thus, a religious educator still holds on to his/her religious beliefs and practices while constructively engaging other religious traditions. The impact of such engagement on the pupils is "the coexistence of different faiths, and to do so not grudgingly but willingly."[62]

Conclusion

The reinvention of peace culture in Nigeria is a task that must be engaged in by all citizens. The education sector provides an important platform of a profound and convincing orientation for the robust engagement of all religious adherents. While the intention of government to correct and control suspicion and animosity among religions' followers, partly via the current religious education, is laudable, the curricula to translate the policy into practical and effective tool is hampered by deep-rooted exclusive nature of the religious education curricula operated in the country, especially in the Colleges of Education. The religious education curricula of ISS and CRS lack the potentials to affect, in any meaningful manner, a mindset in which a culture of religious peace may be advanced. The confessional nature of the CRS curriculum neither exposes the students to Islamic theology of religions nor to the detail of Islamic beliefs and practices. The same also goes for the ISS curriculum. The Colleges of Education are very much infused with exclusive and intolerant religious curricula. Therefore, there is a need to overhaul the current religious education curricula in the colleges for a more religiously accommodating ones in the search for peaceful coexistence in the country.

Recommendations

From an understanding that the current religious studies curricula in Nigeria's COEs are confessional in nature and that they lack the potentials

[62]*See* David Bosch in Iwuchukwu, *Muslim-Christian Dialogue in Postcolonial Northern Nigeria : The Challenges of Inclusive Cultural and Religious Pluralism*. 155.

to profoundly aid a robust reinvention of a peace culture in the country, the following recommendations are made:

1. A complete review of the current Islamic and Christian religious education curricula of the COEs in the country. The new curricula should be based on a principle of inclusive religious pluralism where one's religious identity is strongly encouraged and sustained on the one hand, and an open receptive attitude to the presence of other religions, with full right of existence and recognition of their claim to religious authenticity are maintained.

2. An inclusive religiously pluralistic curriculum for religious education in Nigeria's COEs should feature courses that would help student-teachers grapple efficiently with their religious affiliations. Such a curriculum would facilitate knowledge of Islam and Indigenous Nigerian Religions, and aid the student-teacher to be compliant with the unfolding global acceptability of religious pluralism. The value of this recommendation includes the acquisition of intellectual maturity to enable mature dialogue with people of different religious persuasions across the globe, while remaining steadfast to one's religious affiliation.

3. The National Commission for Colleges of Education should merge the departments of Christian Religious Studies and Islamic Studies into one single department of Religious Education. Such re-designation would puncture the bloated mutual suspicions among Christians and Muslims within the academic environment and ensure joint academic and corporate activities irrespective of religious affiliation. Similarly, admissions to accredited programs in the Colleges should strictly follow laid down minimum standards rules uninfluenced by undue religious interests and affiliations.

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IN THE THROES OF DENOMINATIONAL RIVALRY: THE FAILED BID TO ESTABLISH A CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA, 1954 - 1956

Nicholas Ibeawuchi Omenka[1]

Introduction

Catholicism in Nigeria is an important success story of the missionary enterprise in Africa in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This singular achievement owes a great deal to the policy of placing the school in the service of evangelization.[2] Through the medium of formal education, the Catholic missions caught up with, and in large part superseded, various Protestant missions which had seemingly unassailable head start in the present political circumscription called Nigeria.

After the Niger Expedition of 1841, the Wesleyan Methodists were the first missionaries to enter the territory today known as Nigeria when Thomas Birch Freeman and William de Graft (a Fanti) arrived in Badagry on 23 September, 1842. This was the effective beginning of Christian missionary enterprise in Nigeria after the abortive efforts of the Portuguese in the 15th to 18th Centuries. This pioneer Methodist missionary initiative was followed by other Protestant denominations in quick succession. In the Western Region, the Anglican Church Missionary Society led by Henry Townsend and accompanied by Samuel Ajayi Crowther, the future veteran missionary on the Niger, landed in Badagry on 17 December, 1842. Townsend based his mission in Abeokuta from 1846 to 1867. The Southern Baptist Convention of America under Rev. Thomas Jefferson Bowen began its Yoruba Mission at Ijaye-Orile in 1853. A Catholic mission in the former Western Region was not founded until 1868 when the Society of African Mission operating from Ouidah established a mission in Lagos.

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[2] For more details, see Nicholas Ibeawuchi Omenka, *The School in the Service of Evangelization: The Catholic Educational Impact in Eastern Nigeria, 1886-1950* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1989).

In the Eastern Region, where denominational rivalry was fiercest, Protestant missions also enjoyed a comfortable head start. Rev. Hope Masterton Waddell led a team of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland Missionaries that arrived in Calabar on 10 April 1846. In 1867, Samuel Ajayi Crowther opened a Niger Mission at Onitsha in 1867. It was not until 1885 that the Catholics appeared on the scene when the Holy Ghost Fathers established a mission at Onitsha. Thanks to the school method of evangelization which was initiated by Fr. Léon Lejeune and passionately sustained by Bishop Joseph Shanahan and his successors, the Catholic Mission successfully challenged Protestant pre-eminence in the eastern region. By a series of boundary conferences which ended in 1932, the Protestant missions comprising mainly the Church Missionary Society, the Presbyterians, the Methodists, and the Kwa Ibo Mission divided up Eastern Nigeria among themselves into spheres of influence.[3]Though acrimonious among themselves, these Protestant missions formed a united front against the Catholic mission which they regarded as an interloper introducing unfair competition with its schools. The struggle that ensued was described by the Catholics in military terms: "Freemasons, Protestants of every description, fallen Christians, angry pagans, all are out and allied…against us to get a firm and final hold over the school….For God's sake and for the sake of the child so dear to Him, let us all be united in our effort…to safeguard the general line of battle…."[4]

The 1940s and 1950s saw a rapid development of Catholic secondary schools. In 1949, Father John Jordan sent a list of the most important Catholic Secondary schools in Nigeria to Dr. Kenneth Mellanby of the newly established University College Ibadan.[5] Remarkably, of the

[3] E.A. Udo, "The Missionary Scramble for Spheres of Influence in South-Eastern Nigeria, 1900-50." *The History of Christianity in West Africa*, edited by O.U. Kalu. (London: Longman, 1980): 159-181.

[4] The Central Archives of the Spiritan Fathers in Chevilly near Paris (hereafter ASF): 556-VII, "Handwritten Circular", n.d.

[5] Onitsha Archdiocesan Archives (OAA): "Jordan to Mellanby," Onitsha, 22 July 1949. The schools include, St. Gregory's College Lagos, Holy Child College Ikoyi Lagos, St. Theresa's College Ibadan, Catholic College Kaduna, Our Lady's College Kaduna, St. Patrick's College Asaba, Christ the King College Onitsha, College of the Immaculate Conception Enugu, Holy Family College Abak, St. Patrick's College Ikot-Ansa Calabar, Bishop Shanahan College Orlu, Stella Maris College Port Harcourt, St. Joseph' College Sasse Buea, Queen of the

seventeen colleges on the list, eleven were in the Eastern Region, which at the time included Western Cameroons. Furthermore, according to the Annual Report of the Eastern Nigeria Ministry of Education for 1956, five out of the seven secondary schools opened that year were Catholic, and seventeen of the twenty-nine new Grade Two and Grade Three Teacher Training Colleges were also under Catholic auspices.[6] This factor would make the Eastern Region the obvious choice for the location of the proposed Catholic University. The unprecedented rapid expansion of Catholic secondary education enabled the elated Father Jordan, the Education Adviser to the Nigerian Catholic Missions, to declare in 1948 that "we shall be in a strong position to face State control, because the larger the number of qualified Catholic teachers in the schools, the greater our influence."[7]

The mention of influence by Father Jordan is significant. For decades the Protestants enjoyed unchallenged political dominance and social influence in Nigeria, thanks to their early acquisition of post-primary education from such institutions as Fourah Bay College Freetown, Yaba Higher College Lagos, Hope Waddell Institute Calabar, and Denis Memorial College Onitsha. In 1955, the Catholic Education Adviser was at pains to note that the Premier, his Deputy, and eleven out of the twelve cabinet ministers, in other words the entire Government of the then Eastern Region, were Protestant.[8] Elsewhere, he was quick to note that the Protestants had already attained "a dangerous degree of control at the top, both in and out of Education."[9] In 1957, Bishop Whelan, a major player in Catholic education development and management, echoed the same sentiment when he said that "The Church which followed the flag was Anglican or creation of a Protestant government. Consequently the first

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Rosary College Onitsha, Holy Ghost College Owerri, Cornelia Connelly College Uyo and Queen of the Rosary Enugu.

[6] See D.B. Abernethy, *Church and State in Nigerian Education* (Ibadan, 1967), p.27, note 36.

[7] ASF: 556/VII, J. Jordan, "Organization of School Effort." Onitsha, 15 July, 1948.

[8] See OAA: J. Jordan, "Background Note to Nigeria, With Special Reference to Catholic Education," 31 May, 1955, p.6.

[9] J. Jordan, "Catholic Education and Catholicism in Nigeria," *African Ecclesiastical Review*, 2 (1960), 61f.

educated elite was Protestant in religion or in sympathy. This naturally bred a sense of inferiority in Catholics."[10]

Catholic education policy at the very beginning was focused on the provision of elementary education. Efforts to offer post-primary education was concentrated solely on teacher training schools for a steady supply of qualified teachers to the numerous primary schools. It was not until 1933 that the first Catholic secondary school, Christ the King College, was established at Onitsha. The extensive build-up of Catholic secondary education in the 1940s and 1950s was geared towards catching up with Protestant dominance of the political and social life of the region. The effort paid remarkable dividends and in 1957 Bishop Whelan was able to declare victory.[11] At last the Catholic mission in Nigeria could, with the emergence of the Knights of Blessed Mulumba and members of the Eastern Nigeria Catholic Council (ENCC), boast of influential groups in public life both within and outside government.[12]

For Catholic education policy makers, more needed to be done than achievement of parity with the Protestants in the education sector. As Father J. Jordan frankly admitted, the mere achievement of parity in institutional strength did not bring instant equality with the Protestants. His conviction was that "It will...be many years before we can equal them in public influence. Indeed, we can never hope to do so if we do not find an outlet for our best boys in a Catholic university."[13] The idea of a Catholic University of Nigeria was therefore a tactical move to overtake Protestant social and political pre-eminence in Nigerian society in one giant leap.

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[10] J.B. Whelan, "Our School: Victory in Nigeria," *World Mission*, 8 (Fall, 1957), 25.

[11] Ibid. See also Nicholas Omenka, "The Legacy of Bishop J.B. Whelan: Education, Church and Society," *History of the Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province, 1912-2012*, edited by Chukwu Anthony Njoku and Mary Noelle Ezeh (Owerri: Assumpta Press, 2012): 161-190.

[12] See Nicholas Omenka, "The Christian Missions and the Training for Political Leadership in Eastern Nigeria," *International Review of Missions*, vol. XCII, no. 366 (Geneva, 2003): 356-369.

[13] OAA: J. Jordan, "Background Note to Nigeria," p. 6.

The Clamour for Higher Education

The educational involvement of the Colonial Administrations in all British dependencies in Africa before the 1920s was of a most superficial and secondary character. This was corollary to the abysmal absence of a general policy on education for the indigenous peoples. The colonizers came to Africa for one purpose only—the economic exploitation of the continent. For a long time, the only involvement of the Africans in this grand objective was in the form of menial jobs in the factories and government offices. To the imperialists, the idea of placing Africans in administrative positions was taboo. Therefore, providing the cognitive skills needed for administrative functions, which is among the raison d'être of higher education, was not contemplated.

Critical voices began to be raised against this anomaly by British social critics and African nationalists. In the words of Lord Haily, "The considerations which decided the character of higher education are largely political, for the type of instruction given depends on the view held of the place in society which the educated African may be expected to fill."[14]He then echoed what was then a prevailing reproach: "British policy as yet exhibits no clear view of the future of the educated African….There are few instances in British colonial history when the future of the educated native has been consciously determined, or the educational system deliberately adjusted to fit him for it."[15] This was a view that featured prominently in nationalist struggle for self-rule, especially in the education sector.[16] Nationalist clamour for a Nigerian university was championed by the likes of Nnamdi Azikiwe. In keeping with his pan-African sentiment, he wrote in his book, *Renascent Africa*, published in 1937, that "Black Africa has no university. Black Africa has no intellectual centre where the

[14] Quoted in A. Babs Fafunwa, *History of Education in Nigeria* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1974), p. 141.
[15] Ibid.
[16] For more details on the course of the National Movement in the 1940s, see T. Hodgkin, "Background to Nigerian Nationalism, 3: The coming of Zik and the N.C.N.C., *West Africa*, August 18, 1951, pp. 751-752.

raw materials of African humanity may be reshaped into leaders in all the fields of human endeavour."[17]

Hitherto, the only noteworthy post-secondary institutions in the vast territory collectively known as British West Africa were the Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone, the Achimota College in the Gold Coast and the Yaba College in Lagos. Although they offered courses in the sciences and arts, they did not award degrees. Some critics in fact described the Yaba College, established in 1932, as an advanced secondary school whose products were meant for local consumption as "medical assistants, engineering assistants, agricultural assistants, and ordinary teachers."[18] The establishment of the Yaba College was a direct result of the re-organization of the Nigerian education system by E.R.J. Hussey, the Director of Education from 1929 to 1936. Some critics have suggested that this reorganisation was a product of some questionable motives. In the words of David Abernethy, for instance, the ulterior motive of Hussey's education reform was "to limit the employment opportunities of educated Southern Nigerians."[19]

There are some evidence to support Abernethy's view. Before Hussey's directorship, Sir Hugh Clifford, the Governor of Nigeria from 1919 to 1926, had accused British expatriates of being fearful of educating the Africans to the point of "lowering the prestige of the European officials."[20] Indeed, the diplomas from the Higher College at Yaba was officially declared inferior to similar degrees and diplomas obtained from British institutions. These measures were designed, according to Abernethy, "to consolidate the British position within Nigeria."[21]Even the Catholic Church weighed into this diabolical intent. In an interview with the *Nigerian Daily Times*, Bishop Hinsley, the Apostolic Delegate to British Africa, spoke of a deliberate plan to educate the African "as part merely of a machine for production of wealth for the benefit of

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[17]Quoted in A. Babs Fafunwa, *A History of Nigerian Higher Education* (Lagos: Macmillan, 1971), p. 180.

[18] Otonti Nduka, *Western Education and the Nigerian Cultural Background* (Ibadan: University Press, 1964, rpt. 1982), p. 54.

[19] D.B. Abernethy, *The Political Dilemma of Popular Education: An African Case* (Stanford: The University Press, 1969), p. 94.

[20] Quoted in F. K. Ekechi, *Missionary Enterprise and Rivalry in Igboland, 1857 - 1914* (London: Frank Case, 1972), p.181.

[21] D.B. Abernethy, *The Political Dilemma*, p. 94.

others."[22]Just four days after the Yaba College was opened, the *Nigerian Daily Times* denounced its weak foundation and inferior status. The members of the Lagos intelligentsia were at the vanguard of the vociferous opposition to the nature and quality of higher education offered in the college. They joined the Nigerian Youth Movement founded by Professor Eyo Ita in 1933 specifically for the campaign against the first attempt by the colonial Government to provide higher education in Nigeria. This movement became the first nationalist organization in Nigeria.[23]

Rattled by unrelenting public agitation, the British Government eventually came to the realization that nothing short of a real university could satisfy the higher education yearnings of its dependent colonies in Africa. Accordingly, two colonial higher education commissions were set up in 1943, namely, the Elliot Commission which was intended to look into the development of higher education in British West Africa, and the Asquith Commission which was appointed, among other things, "to consider the principles which should guide the provision of higher education, learning and research and the development of universities in the Colonies."[24]The reports of these two commissions led to the establishment of the University College Ibadan in 1948 and thus became the milestone for higher education in Nigeria.

The Quest for a Catholic University of Nigeria

With the exception of Lovanium in Kinshasa, the Belgian Congo (founded in 1957), and Pius **X**II University in Basutoland (1945), both Catholic, the Christian missions in Africa did not establish universities. This was in sharp contrast with mission higher education records in Asia and Latin America.[25] With an impressive precedence and a large population, the Catholic missions in Nigeria were poised to resolve this social privation. Long before any university was contemplated for Nigeria, they deliberated

[22] ASF: 554/VI, "Bishop Hinsley in Conference with Nigerian Bishops: A Statement of Policy," 1929.
[23] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nigerian_Youth_Movement.
[24] Quoted in C.O. Taiwo, *The Nigerian Education System: Past, Present and Future* (Lagos: Nelson Pitman, 1980), p. 88.
[25] See A. Hastings, "Pattern of African Mission Work," *AFER*, 8 (1966), 293294.

on having a Catholic University of their own. At a general meeting of the Fathers at Ihiala in November 1929, Bishop Charles Heerey, Shanahan's Coadjutor, presented a resolution which called on Bishop Broderick of the Vicariate of Western Nigeria to join in "a united protest to the Government," and called for a Catholic higher college under mission control as a counter to government designs.[26]This was a reaction to the reorganization of the Nigerian education system that year which proposed that teachers for middle or secondary schools would be formed exclusively in higher colleges. Following the establishment of the Yaba College in 1932, Mr Hussey, the Director of Education, indirectly made the training of middle school teachers the prerogative of the Government by denying government grants to any higher college that might be established by the Voluntary Agencies. In December 1929 the desirability of a Catholic higher college featured prominently in a report to the Propaganda Congregation:

> The Government shall allow the missions to keep their primary schools and to train teachers for them. But with regard to the teachers of the intermediary and secondary schools, the Government reserves to itself the right to train them in a very special college, a quasi-university. This quasi-university shall be the only one to be maintained at the expense of the Government. But in view of the [prescribed standards] of these colleges, the missionary societies shall not be able to have theirs without government grants. There is a necessity for the Catholic missions to have, as soon as possible, their quasi Catholic universities.[27]

For reasons which we shall discuss later, this desire to have a Catholic university was not followed up until the 1940s when the reports of the Elliot and Asquith Commissions on higher education were released.

The Catholic missions in Nigeria were the first to give evidence before the Elliot Commission on Higher Education in 1944. By that year there was not a single full-fledged university in the whole of West Africa

[26] ASF: 554/I, "Minutes of the Fathers' Meeting held at the Annual Retreat," Ihiala, 11 November, 1929.
[27] ASF: 554/VII, "Etat Statistique Annuel Pour la Propagande," 1 December, 1929.

and the Catholic detailed evidence was essentially a justification for such an institution:

> The Catholic Missions of Nigeria are unanimous in desiring to see a fully-fledged University in West Africa, and consider Nigeria the most suitable place for it. The need exists, the people are keen and the population is large. It is unthinkable that a population of more than twenty millions should not have its own cadre of specialists to assist in developing it and giving it leadership. According to our way of looking at things, the main point at issue for the commission is not whether there should be a University in the country or not (we assume there should), but rather whether this is the acceptable time or not. The general opinion is that the time for a Nigerian University is close at hand, and that an immediate stepping up of the educational standard in secondary schools is desirable in view of it.[28]

Among other things, the Catholic Missions of Nigeria envisaged the elevation of a few Catholic secondary schools to the Higher Certificate level. They expressed the hope that one of these "Higher Schools" would "ultimately develop into a constituent college of a Nigerian University, with facilities of Science, Art, Philosophy and Divinity."[29]

The author of the Catholic evidence, Father John Jordan, revealed remarkable knowledge of the struggle for a Catholic university in his home country Ireland a century earlier. "A Nigerian University, if founded," he wrote, "must be run on definitely Christian lines, otherwise it will simply turn out a godless elite….We expect a Governing Body with reasonable Mission representation….There should be nothing in the nature of exclusive government control."[30] This view mirrors that of John Henry Newman in his celebrated book, *The Idea of a University*, namely, that the objective of a university is intellectual, not moral, but it needs the church for its integrity.[31] Furthermore, the Catholic evidence insisted that "some

[28] OAA: "Outline of Evidence Given Before the Elliot Commission on Higher Education by the Catholic Missions of Nigeria, 1944."
[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid.
[31] John Henry Newman, *The Idea of a University Defined and Illustrated: In Nine Discourses Delivered to the Catholics of Dublin.* The Project Gutenberg

effort will be made to introduce a liberal element into University training, over-specialization will cause Nigerians to leave the University with no general outlook and entirely devoid of the culture that goes with the Classics, Philosophy and Modern Languages."[32]

The idea of a liberal university was born in the University of London as opposed to the conservatism of Oxford and Cambridge which, for over seven centuries, were the only English universities. The founders of the University College, London, drew their inspiration from Scottish Universities and established two traditions that greatly influenced the development of other universities, "first that research was an essential function of a university…second that researchers should be free to follow whatever link they saw fit and that they themselves and their pupils should be of any race, religion or creed."[33] It was not surprising therefore that the University of London was chosen as the institution to which the proposed University College in Nigeria was affiliated. In 1948, the University College was established in Ibadan with three founding faculties—arts, science and medicine. The faculty of Agriculture was added a few years later.

Catholic support for the establishment of a state-controlled university was based on two fundamental objectives, firstly the desire to enhance Catholic influence in Nigerian society and bring it at par with the Protestant position; and, secondly, the need to produce a Catholic elite devoid of untoward ideology. Unfortunately, they quickly discovered that the higher education opportunity at Ibadan was a "Western Show" where "Protestant influence is…strong in staff and students."[34] From the very beginning, the University College acquired a strong Protestant bias, and by 1955, it had about 500 students out of which 250 were Protestant as opposed to only 60

Ebook 24526, February 5, 2008, Preface, p. ix. Newman's *Idea of a University* has been described as the most influential work on modern education. G.M. Young remarked that only two books on education deserve to be kept "the rest might with no loss to humanity …be pulped," namely, Aristotle's *Ethics* and Newman's *Idea of a University* (quoted in Colin Barr, *Paul Cullen, John Henry Newman, and the Catholic University of Ireland, 1845-1865*, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003, p. 1).

[32] OAA: "Outline of Evidence Given Before the Elliot Commission."

[33] See Michael D. Stevens and W. Roderick, *Universities for a Changing World: The Role of the University in Late Twentieth Century* (London: David & Charles, 1975), p. 23.

[34] OAA: J. Jordan, "Background Note to Nigeria," p.7.

Catholic students. To make matters worse, the overwhelming Protestant staff majority made it possible to establish a Divinity School for Protestant theology.[35]In other words, the study of Catholic theology was not accessible to the Catholic laity who could not avail themselves of that opportunity in the major seminaries.

The second objective behind Catholic support for a university under state control was based primarily on the same thinking behind the British Government's decision to establish a West African college of higher education, namely, the undesirability of sending Africans to Europe and America for studies. Both church and state were united in their aversion against the increasingly vociferous Nationalists whose opposition to foreign rule was attributed to their educational background. In the words of Father M.J. Bane, Africans who had studied in American colleges and universities were "spiritually poisoned." He posed the rhetorical question: "Is it any wonder that Catholic Prelates in West Africa are apprehensive and alarmed?"[36]He goes on to say that "From Nigeria in British West Africa, young Nnamdi Azikiwe came to us in the 1920's...Unfortunately, due to the pinkish education he received in America, his facile pen is often used to try to embarrass the Catholic Church in Nigeria."[37] Catholic concern over the failure of its two higher education goals was given forceful expression in the following passage:

> Protestant leadership in higher education over the years, combined with the fact that University staff in West Africa are recruited mainly from England with its Protestant and secularist traditions has brought it to pass that Catholic influence, Catholic traditions, and Catholic life are all practically non-existent at the top of the educational ladder. This is a situation which obviously calls for change, particularly now that self-government for the West Coast is just around the corner, and self-government means political power in the hands of the educated few. We simply must produce a Catholic elite in Nigeria, or take the risk of being administered out of our whole school system by rulers

[35] Ibid. It will be recalled that Chinua Achebe, one of the pioneer students, finished with three combined honours—English, History and Divinity.
[36] M.J. Bane, "Educational Problems in West Africa," in *World Mission*, 1 (September, 1950) p. 90.
[37] Ibid. p. 80.

> with secularist traditions.....Catholic ideas and ideals must be set against these lay ones, which are rooted in Masonic and Socialist thought or absence of thought.[38]

These sentiments informed the renewed quest for a Catholic University of Nigeria between 1954 and 1956. During the Marian Congress in Lagos in 1954, the Archbishops and Bishops of Nigeria met under the presidency of the Apostolic Delegate to discuss the possibility of instituting a Catholic University. They decided in understanding with Cardinal McIntyre of Los Angeles that a solution might be reached in the United States. This decision is practical: the two West African Universities—Ibadan and Achimota in the Gold Cost—were yet not independent degree awarding institutions. What was needed for a Catholic University in Nigeria was, in the words of the Church leaders, "a society with men experienced in University life and with existing Universities under its control." The reference is to the Jesuit Order whose Fordham and other Universities were ready and willing to offer affiliation. The Catholic bishops therefore mandated their Education Adviser, Father Jordan, to go to Rome for a meeting with the Superior General of the Jesuit Order for deliberations on buildings, finance and all the other adjuncts.

Before embarking on this crucial journey, the indefatigable Education Adviser produced a document in May 1955 which he entitled, "Background Note to Nigeria, With Special Reference to Catholic Education." In it, he outlined the education developments in the three regions of the federation and stressed forcefully the efforts made by the Catholics to redress the imbalance in the secondary arena. With regard to the proposed Catholic University of Nigeria, he left no detail untouched over finance, building, affiliation, entry requirements and faculties. He gave the envisaged faculties as follows:

> Arts and science would be sine qua non. Financial considerations would rule out medicine, except State sponsored by special arrangement. Teacher training for secondary schools would be a possibility though here Government recognition would be essential. Engineering degrees are rare in Nigeria, and this faculty would be of great value. Economics...should be an easy choice. It may be that a beginning with arts and science are at best with arts, science and

[38] OAA: J. Jordan, "Background Note to Nigeria," p.9.

> economics would be a wise plan, and that other faculties including philosophy and divinity would follow at the dictation of circumstances.[39]

Worthy of note is the exclusively secular nature of the proposed Catholic University. Contrary to the wishes expressed in 1944 in the evidence given before the Elliot Commission, where Divinity was accorded a place of prominence, this official plan a decade later has little room for the study of Christian theology at the initial stage. This was clearly an effort to make the Catholic University open to Protestants and Muslims, as can be seen in the following passage:

> You find Protestants and Jews, and even Buddhists and Shintoists, attending American Catholic Universities, while you find many Catholics being educated in institutions under non-Catholic control. Mutual regard and amity go hand in hand with respect for God and for religious observance. All this is as it should be. And this is the spirit which shall prevail in our Catholic University. Moslems and Protestants, as well as Catholics will be welcomed within its portals; and will be entirely free, mentally and spiritually, to pursue knowledge and truth.[40]

There were enormous financial difficulties to be contended with, and excruciating affiliation problems to be tackled. But first, government approval for the project was vital. Luckily, the Premier of Eastern Nigeria, Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, was favourably disposed to the idea of a Catholic University and made this known to Father Jordan in an interview. "The people of this Region," he said, "desire better and better education…and we in government must do our utmost to give it to them. Father, if you succeed in bringing here a University on the lines of Notre Dame or Fordham, the people will rise up to welcome it, and I shall be entirely on

[39] OAA: J. Jordan, "Background Note to Nigeria," p. 12.
[40] OAA: John Jordan, "Nigerian Catholic University," Press Release, n.d. (most probably August 1955).

your side."[41] However, the Premier was diplomatically noncommittal to any possible financial involvement of his government.[42]

The Catholic Education Adviser began his education tour of Europe and America in May 1955 having been mandated by the Nigerian Catholic Bishops to do so in August 1954. For four months, he visited many universities and discussed Nigeria's educational needs with high officials and friends in Rome and the US. In the US, he had talks with the Jesuit Educational Association, which controlled 27 Universities in America alone. The Association agreed "in principle" to establish a Catholic University in Nigeria.[43] In February 1956, the Superior General of the Jesuit Order sent Father Burke, Regional Director of Higher Education in New England, to Nigeria to make a study of the possibilities of this endeavour. This represented the most outstanding move to establish a Catholic University of Nigeria to the delight and jubilation of well-meaning Nigerians, especially in the Eastern Region. Sadly, the euphoria was short-lived.

Even before Father Jordan returned to Nigeria in August 1955, the press was awash with attacks and criticisms of the Catholic University. A prospective student who was asking for a scholarship to study laboratory technology in order to become a staff in the proposed Catholic University described the criticisms appearing in the local dailies as "destructive."[44] At the vanguard of the denunciations were members of the Christian Association of Nigeria which was almost exclusively Protestant and many of which leaders were from the East. Unlike the Nigerian Youth Movement which denounced the inferior education offered in Yaba College in the 1930s, the Christian Council of Nigeria opposed the Catholic University simply because it was Catholic. Father Jordan described this attitude as "signs of bigotry and unchristian bitterness."[45] As the dominant, if not exclusive, members of the Premier's cabinet, they left no stone unturned to prevent the Catholics from being the first to own a University in the Eastern Region. Henceforth, the Eastern Nigerian Government put its full

[41] Ibid.
[42] See OAA: "Mr. Glew, Private Secretary to the Premier, to J. Jordan," Enugu, 7 June 1955.
[43] OAA: John Jordan, "Nigerian Catholic University," Press Release.
[44] OAA: "S.N. Muotoe to Jordan," Ibadan, 29 September 1955.
[45] OAA: John Jordan, "Nigerian Catholic University," Press Release.

weight behind the search for higher education, a quest which would soon culminate in the foundation of the University of Nigeria Nsukka.

There was no doubt in the mind of the Catholic Education Adviser that his pioneer effort to bring a higher education establishment to the East had been hijacked by the Protestant dominated ruling party. In a press release in response to the attacks of the Christian Council of Nigeria, he emphasized the fact that the mandate given to him by the Nigerian Bishops to approach the Jesuits for the establishment of a Catholic University predated the very first talk of a possible Eastern University under government auspices. In a letter to the Private Secretary to the Premier, he revealed that "the idea of University under Catholic auspices has been in the air—the ecclesiastical air—since 1944, but has never taken the form of concrete proposal to Government because of staff and other difficulties (largely financial).[46] The Premier, Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, who only a few months earlier had given his blessing and encouragement for a Catholic University, suddenly became lukewarm over the Catholic project. In a prophetic insight, Father Jordan had anticipated the opposition of the Protestant dominated regional cabinet. In his "Background Note," he had remarked that "The whole temper and tone of British Colonial administration favours State controlled schooling, and opposes denominationalism in education. Most Nigerian…politicians accept the views of their erst-while masters in this regard."[47] This conjecture became manifest during his affiliation search. The Director of the University of the London Institute of Education, G.G. Jeffery, first suggested that the Catholic University should award its own degree within the ambit of the Catholic Church. Then he recommended the use of the external degree of London, adding that his colleagues "will not view with enthusiasm the establishment of other university institutions in Nigeria…." They would probably resist any "special relationship of the type which applies to Ibadan."[48]The Catholic University was never approved and consequently the Jesuits did not return to Nigeria for this well-intended project.

A bill demanding the establishment of a university in the East was hurriedly passed into law in 1955, the very year the quest for a Catholic University went into full gear, a move clearly intended to nip the ambitious

[46] OAA: "Jordan to Mr. Glew," Onitsha, 21 March 1955.
[47] OAA: J. Jordan, "Background Note," p. 9.
[48] OAA: "G.D Jeffery to Jordan," London, 16 May 1956.

Catholic University project in the bud. By 1955, the Eastern Region had neither the funds nor the facilities for a university and it was not until 7th October 1960 that the University of Nsukka was formally inaugurated in a ceremony marking the climax of the Nigerian Independent celebrations.[49] With that, it became the first full-fledged University in Nigeria. It also delivered a mortal blow to the ill-fated and ill-timed Catholic private enterprise.

Factors Responsible for the Failure of the Enterprise

The failure to establish an institution of higher learning in a region most desirous of such an opportunity is as astonishing as it is heart-breaking. However, at the root of this catastrophe lay a major flaw in Catholic education policy not only in Nigeria, but also in the whole of Africa, namely, the failure at the very beginning of mission enterprise in the continent to see in secondary education the germ for nation-building. Among the Protestant missionary societies which came to Africa in the nineteenth century, there was a general awareness that education, especially at the secondary level, was necessary for all aspects of nation-building in the continent. In the words of the Secretary General of the Anglican Church Missionary Society, it was essential to train a body of natives "who may form an intelligent and influential class of society and become founders of a kingdom which shall render incalculable benefits to Africa.[50] Venn's famous triple autonomies—self-propagating, self-supporting and self-governing church—were the ultimate goals in Protestant education ventures. That was the thinking behind the establishment of Fourah Bay College in Freetown Sierra Leone which became the powerhouse of Protestantism in West Africa. Sierra Leone also played host to Ethiopianism, the Africa-for-Africans ideology which led to the rise of African Nationalism and African Independent Churches.

There was lacking in Catholic education policy, in the beginning, a comparable objective towards nation-building. As late as 1926, only very

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[49] See A. Babs Fafunwa, *A History of Nigerian Higher Education*, p. 182.

[50] "H. Venn to Robbin," 22 January 1857, quoted in J.F.A. Ajayi, "Nineteenth Century Origins of Nigerian Nationalism," *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, vol. II (1961), p.199. See also C. Peter Williams, *The Ideal of the Self-Governing Church: A Study in Victorian Missionary Strategy.* Studies in Christian Mission, Leiden; New York: E.J. Brill, 1990.

few Missions of the Holy Ghost Congregation around the world were offering secondary education to their pupils. In that year, the congregation had about 1,200 primary schools with over 45,000 pupils in Nigeria. But like the greater majority of the society's missions, Nigeria did not possess a single secondary school.[51] Since the primary school was the medium through which the masses found allegiance to the Church, it was considered worthy of overriding priority over the secondary school, which could only be open to a privileged few. This policy succeeded in ascribing to the Catholics the status of a numerical giant, but a political dwarf. The consequences of this aberration in education became apparent during the quest for a Catholic University.

The best prospects for a Catholic institute of higher learning were given in the 1940s, when educational policy was still largely directed by a central Board in Lagos controlled largely by expatriate directors, and when the readiness to make grants to major educational projects was notably present. But at that period, the longing for a Catholic University did not possess a concrete feasibility as a result of the meagre scope of Catholic post-primary education. A reasonable number of Catholic students with the necessary entry requirements into a university simply did not yet exist. By the mid-1950s, when that impediment had been considerably eliminated following the massive build-up of Catholic secondary schools, the political climate in Nigeria had assumed a dramatic change: internal self-government had been achieved in the Regions, and education had become a regional affair. Catholic authorities had henceforth to deal with the Nigerian Nationalists who by all intent and purpose were bitterly antagonistic towards Catholicism and its formidable challenge to Protestant socio-political supremacy in Nigeria. The Catholic Education Adviser was very much aware of what lay in store for the education objective he was trying to achieve as foreshadowed in the following statement:

> Though I was assured verbally by the Prime Minister of the Eastern Region [Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe] that his government would welcome a university run on the lines of Fordham or Notre Dame...I have reason

[51] See "Education Statistics," in *Bulletin de la Congregation des Peres du Saint-Esprit* (hereafter referred to as Bulletin) vol. 32 (1925-26).

> to believe that his executive council with its Protestant ethos will not support him in this view.[52]

In order to understand the magnitude of denominational antagonism that prevailed in the 1950s and why the plan for a Catholic University was doomed to failure right from its conception in 1954, we have to take a look at how the Protestants were preparing to confront Catholic "expansionism" head on during the same period. In August 1950 the entire population of Anglican teachers in the East assembled at St. Paul's College at Awka, their most important education institution in the Region after Denis Memorial Secondary School Onitsha. To this crucial meeting were invited prominent Protestant politicians, including members of the regional cabinet. The deliberations of the week-long event were devoted entirely to the theme, "The Roman Catholic Threat." A paper read at that workshop has emerged as one of the most famous documents of the missionary era in Nigeria. Written by E.O. Enemo, Principal of Diobu Elementary Training College Port Harcourt, and entitled, "What are we Anglicans Doing?", it aroused such a great feeling of alarm that it was put in pamphlet form which was intended strictly for private circulation among members of the Anglican community. But the pamphlet fell into Catholic hands and within days almost every Catholic teacher in Eastern Nigeria had received a copy. In his paper, Mr. Enemo extolled the virtues of Catholicism and praised the excellence and achievements of Catholic educational institutions in Eastern Nigeria. He carefully enumerated Catholic post-primary institutions for boys and girls which outnumbered those of the Protestants put together twelve to one. He expressed these extraordinary commendations of a detested opponent merely to awaken his compatriots to the grave dangers which Catholic expansionism posed to the Anglican Church in Eastern Nigeria. At the beginning of the sixteen-page document he has the following to say:

> No one who remembers the ascendancy which was ours twenty years ago in primary schools, in medical services, in normal colleges, in numbers in the training of our agents and clergy, in the influence wielded by the products of our institution...can now behold us playing an role [sic] without shedding substantial tears. The teachers in the almost insignificant field are alarmed, students in colleges know it,

[52] OAA: J. Jordan, "Background Note to Nigeria", p. 9.

> ignorant Christians in the villages bewail it that we are fast becoming a minority group, and it requires actual experience to appreciate the woes of a man who belongs to a minority group in any society.[53]

Comments on Enemo's paper by Daniel Erinne, the Organising Secretary of the Teachers' Week went much deeper by making poignant comparisons between Protestantism and Catholicism in Nigeria in areas of Christian education, moral influence, Christian character, Christian devotion and architectural beauty of school buildings and found the Protestants abysmally inferior.

Although the Catholics received Enemo's paper and the comments with some legitimate pride because of the good things they said about Catholicism in general, the purpose of the paper and its implications were not lost to them. On the eve of self-rule in Eastern Nigeria, the Protestants were forming a common front to oppose the spread of Catholicism in the region. It is not surprising, therefore, that when self-government finally came, the Protestant dominated Government placed education control and management at the centre stage of its politics. For the first time, the Catholic authorities, still largely expatriate, were confronted with the bitter realities emanating from their belated attention to post-primary education and from their unsympathetic attitude towards the nationalist struggle. If the proliferation of Catholic secondary schools was alarming, the addition of a Catholic University to the mix was simply outrageous. With state authority now at their disposal, the opponents of the ambitious Catholic education venture succeeded in making sure that it did not see the light of day.

Eventually, Protestant success in putting a wedge to Catholic progress turned out to be a pyrrhic victory. By forming an alliance with the nationalists, the Protestant missions inadvertently undermined their own mission enterprise. In their preference of a regional university under state control to one under Catholic auspices, they manifested the tendency of the Protestant Missions to see secularized education as a lesser evil than Catholic domination. The state take-over of mission schools in 1970 certainly hurt the Protestants as much as it hurt the Catholics. But the fact

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[53] E.O. Enemo, "What are We Anglicans Doing?", A Lecture Presented to the Teachers' Week at Awka, August, 1950, p.5.

remains that that measure was systematically prepared by Protestant politicians, whom Father J. Jordan rightly described as being imbued with "Masonic and secularist thought or lack of thought."[54] They readily evoked their Protestant backgrounds whenever a formidable front against Catholic expansionism was called for, but in pursuit of their secularist aspirations, they showed their anger alike to all missionary bodies and establishments—Catholic and Protestant.

Concluding Remarks

To a large extent, the Protestant opposition of a Catholic university was an enlightened opportunism that sought to nip in the bud the rise of a Catholic intellectual class. For many decades, the Protestant Missions in Nigeria had enjoyed an unchallenged superiority in secondary education, a lead which had given them a comparable dominance in the political parties. As it were, the Protestant leaders could not bear to see themselves and their missions outdone in educational prestige. This attitude epitomized denominational rivalry at its very worst. There was nothing in the proposal to found a university for Nigerians that was out of character with the educational objectives of members of the Christian Council many of whom were renowned "preaching-politicians," or with the aspirations of the nationalist movement, except that it was Catholic. They refused to acknowledge the fact that the most outstanding American universities like Yale, Notre Dame, Harvard, Princeton, Fordham, where most of them were educated, were established by religious bodies. Unless you are in Pittsburgh, you will never have any inkling as to the proprietorship of these church established institutions. Although they have become overtly secular today, their Christian foundation and heritage are not totally obliterated.[55] In their statement of intent, the Catholic authorities said that the doors of the Catholic University would be open to Protestants and Muslims and that the institution would serve "a wider field than Nigeria,"[56]That promise did not assuage the traditional hostility towards anything Catholic. With the proliferation of church owned universities in Nigeria today, the demons of denominationalism are yet to be exorcised in them.

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[54] OAA: J. Jordan, "Background Note to Nigeria," p.9.
[55] See George Marsden, *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Non-belief* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999).
[56] OAA: "Jordan to Private Secretary to the Premier," Enugu: 21 March 1955.

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ENCOUNTERS THROUGH SPIRIT-LED IMAGINATION: SPIRITAN MISSION AND EDUCATIONAL DIMENSIONS

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Abstract

This essay analyses writings of the Catholic Congregation of the Holy Spirit to explore how the Spiritan vision fosters "imaginative encounters." Spiritans' commitments to the integration of contemplative and apostolic dimensions in "practical union," mission of liberation and evangelization of the poor, and intercultural community building provide foundations for an educational approach that facilitates what educational philosopher Douglas Sloan calls "insight-imagination." Key dimensions of the Spiritan vision, especially through the work of its co-founder Francis Libermann and his interpreters, are analysed in conjunction with Sloan's framework and with educational practices and research findings at the author's own Spiritan-founded university. Implications for African tertiary education are suggested.

Introduction

In the mid-nineteenth century, Rev. Francis Libermann wrote to his confreres in the Congregation of the Holy Spirit:

> Action or practical union [with God] consists in divesting oneself of natural impressions to open one's soul to divine impressions ...Then we have a superabundance of truth...we see the things of God

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> effortlessly and clearly, because our soul is in its element, the divine light.[2]

In 2013, a group of educators from that congregation wrote:

> Spiritan education presumes that every human being possesses a specific vocation in and through which the personality unfolds and character is developed. This presumes that all our educational, evangelizing efforts seek to form and provide an "upbringing" in the image of Christ who is "the image of the unseen God" (Colossians 1:15)[3]

Bringing these expressions together, a particular character emerges for the nature of "Spiritan" spirituality and education: Spiritans, through *openness* to the action of God in self and others, become *capable of seeing* the divine image in both self and others. The nature of such openness involves an act of the imagination, as the divine image, invisible to our eyes, becomes evident through the Spiritan's faith-based conviction of its presence. Education and all other forms of ministry proceed accordingly, with priority given to forming others in the knowledge of themselves as "the image of the unseen God."

The Congregation of the Holy Spirit (the Spiritans) is a Roman Catholic order of vowed religious men, present in many parts of the world. My university, Duquesne University of the Holy Spirit, fosters a Spiritan-infused educational vision. During twenty years at Duquesne, I have observed how the distinctive aspects of this vision promote what I will call "imaginative encounters," conducted for the sake of greater human and planetary flourishing. Immersion in this Spiritan ethos has, in turn, led me into research to discover the dynamics of these imaginative encounters, in key Spiritan writings as well as the living witness of Spiritan educators, and to place these findings in dialogue with sources in education and religious education.

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[2] Qtd. in David L. Smith, "Libermann's Spirituality: A Spirituality of Presence," *Spiritan Horizons* 3 (2008): 11.

[3] Jeff Duaime, "The Heartbeat of Spiritan Education in the US," *Spiritan Horizons* 8 (2013): 107.

Accordingly, this essay will advance the following thesis: The Spiritan vision of education, as grounded in its vision of "practical union" with God and others, its core sense of mission in evangelization and liberation of the poor, and its commitment to intercultural hospitality and community building, both fosters and is itself shaped by imaginative encounters. Educators in African tertiary institutions and other settings—whether or not their work is explicitly "religious"—can therefore benefit from incorporating Spiritan educational sensibilities in seeking to nurture imaginative encounters in their contexts.

In pursuing this argument, I will turn first to a brief historical overview of the Congregation and how one of its founders, Francis Libermann, developed a spirituality based on "practical union." This disposition shaped the members' imaginative openness to encounter with God as integrally related to their zeal for mission to others. Guided by this spirituality and the foundational importance of the Christian Gospel text, Luke 4:18-19, Spiritans developed a commitment to evangelization and liberation of the poor in the global South—though not without the limitations of their European colonialist context in their outreach to African slaves, especially in the nineteenth century. Continuing into the present day, Spiritans' growth in the global South—and diminishment in the global North—challenges them to new imaginative encounters as they seek to live hospitably in intercultural communities and minister in interreligious settings.

Interwoven in this exposition, I will point to correlations for these key Spiritan themes with the work of educational philosopher Douglas Sloan on "imagination-insight" to show creative and mutually reinforcing convergences between them. This will lead into a look at some contemporary work on key pedagogical elements of Spiritan education today, with reference to reflections on "Spiritan pedagogy" by Duquesne University faculty and preliminary analysis of data from a qualitative study of Spiritan educators' self-understanding and practice. Finally, I will offer some recommendations for educators to draw upon these resources in their own cultivation of education for imaginative encounter.

In this project I am conscious that as a white United States woman in a university setting, with limited experience of cultures outside the global North, my assumptions in the use of concepts such as "imagination" are limited by my context and intellectual formation. Thus,

I must acknowledge that my very language carries meanings that may well be foreign to the African setting and other parts of the global South. As Oyèrónkẹ́ Oyěwùmí says in her study of the "invention of women" in Yorùbá society, West Africa: "Merely by analyzing a particular society with gender constructs, scholars create gender categories. To put this another way: by writing about any society through a gendered perspective, scholars necessarily write gender into that society."[4] Despite such limitations, I seek to discern in Spiritan thinking and activity, with the aid of Sloan's categories, the kind of Spirit-given inspiration that *may begin* to move beyond the limitations of its own foundations. I believe that a theological and spiritual approach, by its nature, assumes the possibility of such boundary-crossing through its assumption of the dynamic presence of Spirit in human endeavors. Thus, while "imagination" is itself a culture-bound concept, it may still offer a metaphor for illuminating the work of educators today, if deployed with appropriate awareness.

The Spiritan and other sources on which I draw, including the congregation's founders, were also shaped by specific categories and controversies, especially the French Enlightenment setting in which key aspects of their spirituality and approach to mission were established. Thus, I will give some attention to critical analyses of their work, as well as the larger assumptions that shaped European missionaries' dealings with Africans.

The Spiritans

The Spiritan congregation was "co-founded" through the creation and subsequent merger of two Catholic men's religious congregations. Claude Poullart des Places, a young Frenchman, founded the Congregation of the Holy Ghost in 1703 in Paris, along with a seminary for impoverished students preparing to become clergy. While not established for work in the

[4] Oyèrónkẹ́ Oyěwùmí, *The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), xv. My reliance on the category of "imagination" is itself an illustration of the global North's tendency to privilege human's visual sense over others; see Oyěwùmí, 2-3 and 9.

foreign missions, the order soon was assigned to staff French colonies where diocesan and other religious order priests were lacking, such as French Guinea and Senegal.[5] In subsequent decades, Spiritan missionaries went to Asian locations such as Cambodia, China and Siam, as well as North American outposts including Quebec and Nova Scotia.[6]

In 1841, Francis Libermann founded the Congregation of the Holy Heart of Mary. Libermann was especially interested in ministry with emancipated slaves and promoted outreach in the French-occupied areas of the Caribbean, the Indian Ocean and Africa. In 1848, the two congregations merged into a single Congregation of the Holy Ghost, with Libermann as its leader.[7] Its mission scope expanded in Europe, North America and the global South throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. "Today [Libermann's] spiritual descendents serve in 62 countries on five continents, and more than 3,000 members."[8] In the twenty-first century, most men in formation to become Spiritans, as well as fully professed Spiritans, are from the global South, with North American and European members a decided minority.

From the beginnings of the Spiritan congregation, lay people (non-vowed and non-ordained, women and men) have also been attracted by its vision. Accordingly, various configurations of lay supporters are affiliated with the congregation in regions where they are exercising their mission. Like the ordained Spiritans, those who wish to commit themselves formally as "Lay Spiritans" participate in formation and are immersed in the spirituality and mission activities of the congregation.[9]

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[5] Henry J. Koren, *The Spiritans: A History of the Congregation of the Holy Ghost* (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University, 1958), 28-31.

[6] Koren, 35-44.

[7] See Koren's account of this union and its early years with Libermann as Superior General in his Chap. 6, 97-155.

[8] Duquesne University Center for Spiritan Studies, "Founders of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit," accessed 16 June 2018, http://www.duq.edu/about/centers-and-institutes/spiritan-studies/congregation-founders.

[9] Lay Spiritan formation has varied across the congregation's provinces worldwide, but tends to include particular attention to the cultivation of individual and group prayer life, reading and reflection on the works of the Founders, mentoring by committed Lay Spiritans and ordained Spiritans and

Sloan's "Insight-Imagination" and Spiritan Themes Related to "Imaginative Encounter"

The work of US scholar Douglas Sloan provides a characterization of the dynamics of imagination-insight that will be central to my analysis of key Spiritan themes. I find his work particularly useful in considering the Spiritans for two major reasons. First, the integrative nature of his project seeks to move past the dichotomous thinking style that objectifies what is "other," and to honour the relational search for understanding in ways that resonate with Spiritans' missionary and educational commitments. Second, his core concept of "insight-imagination" is strongly consonant with the Spiritans' commitment to living in openness to the dynamic, transformative working of the Holy Spirit.

Sloan critiques the modern "Western" paradigm in which "knowledge" is split from "imagination," leading to assumptions of the former's objectivity and freedom from values and the latter's denigration. He maintains that such a dichotomy is inadequate to understand the authentic use of "reason" through which knowledge is created. It also exerts a destructive influence on our human relations and relationship with the earth. "The faithful uses of reason come not from discarding analytical and informational knowledge, but from grounding it in a prior and primary grasp of the larger whole."[10]

In offering a more holistic and integrative model, Sloan relies on the work of natural scientist David Bohm in his characterization of imagination as epistemic catalyst: "All genuinely new knowledge comes by means of passionate, energy-filled insight that penetrates and pierces through our ordinary ways of thinking."[11] We depend on our imaginative capacities to receive and interpret data from our perceptions, organizing these into

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participation in Spiritan ministries. Anne Marie Witchger Hansen, a veteran creator and leader for this formation in North America as well as the global South, has recently produced the *Lay Spiritan Formation Program: United States Province* (Congregation of the Holy Spirit Province of the United States, forthcoming).

[10] Douglas Sloan, *Insight-Imagination: The Emancipation of Thought and the Modern World* (San Rafael, CA: Barfield. 2nd ed., 2008; original publication 1983), 20.

[11] Sloan, 141.

coherent ways of apprehending and responding to our world, as well as communicating these to others. This activity is multifaceted, drawing upon affect as well as cognition, physicality as well as the capacity for abstract generalization.

I believe that the Spiritan spiritual and educational legacy provides strong evidence of just such "passionate, energy-filled insight." In what follows, I will turn to three themes of Spiritan spirituality and mission that offer fruitful openings for consideration of imaginative encounters in education. Through cultivating "practical union," evangelizing and liberating the poor, and nurturing models of hospitable intercultural community, Spiritans actively engage their imaginations to catalyse new insights and relationships, in ways directly oriented toward their central mission commitments.

Themes of Spiritan Spirituality and Mission and imaginative Encounters in education

Practical Union

In his important document, "Instruction for Missionaries," Libermann provided a description of how he understood "practical union." A person formed in this disposition is characterized by such complete openness to the gracious presence of the Holy Spirit that he or she is able to set aside one's "nature" and embrace the "supernatural" as a "habitual state of union with God."[12] Personal needs and preferences are renounced in order to take on the priorities of God, discovered through the promptings of God's Holy Spirit and the wisdom of the Spiritan community. Indeed, one of Libermann's best-known metaphors focuses on the human's disposition as being "light as a feather," thus able to be directed wholly by the Spirit's breath.[13] As Leonard comments,

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[12] Francis Mary Paul Libermann, "Instructions for Missionaries" (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Spiritan Collection, n.d.), 40.

[13] Qtd. in Frans Timmermans, "A New Spring for the Congregation," *Spiritan Horizons* 3 (2008): 67 .

> The attitude of "let it happen" or "may it be done" resists the subtle temptation to control God. It demands an acceptance of the provisional, the new, the unexpected, and a relativizing of all, except for the single absolute, God and His reign.[14]

While solely made possible by God's grace, practical union requires that a person employ free will for intentional cooperation with this grace, thus forming the "habit" of seeking oneness with the divine. Libermann recommends some key practices to foster this habit, especially regular prayer and the discipline of self-denial, in order to bring one's human will into sustained openness to God's will.[15]

While the contemporary reader may question the seemingly dualistic language of nature and super-nature, practical union in the Libermann/Spiritan vision is meant to be understood holistically in its fostering of the integration of a vibrant prayer life with congregational praxis. In a study of Libermann's correspondence with some Spiritan missionaries to Africa, for example, Paul Coulon proposes that for Libermann, a complete union of "the urgency of mission (apostolic life) and the urgency of sanctifying contemplation (interior life) combined in a '*contempl-action.*'"[16] As Bernard Tenalleau puts it: "For Father Libermann, apostolic life is made up of an indissoluble union of contemplation and action, and is authenticated by its being rooted in Jesus Christ."[17] Among contemporary Spiritans, article 5 of the *Spiritan Rule of Life* states that "we live out our mission in willing obedience to the Holy Spirit, taking Mary as our model. This condition of habitual fidelity to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit is the 'practical union' of which Libermann

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[14] Padraig Leonard, "Spiritan Spirituality: A Latin-American Perspective," *Spiritan Horizons* 1 (2006): 92.

[15] I am indebted to James Chukwuma Okoye for these insights (personal communication, 29 September 2017).

[16] Paul Coulon, "'Make Yourselves Negro with the Negroes': The Missionary Strategy of a Mystic (1847)," in *Libermann 1802-1852*, eds. Paul Coulon and Madame Brasseur (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Center for Spiritan Studies, 2013), trans. Richard Fagah, 33; emphasis in original.

[17] Berand Tenailleau, "Apostolic Life and Experience of God, According to Libermann," *Spiritan Papers* 11 (Pittsburgh, PA: Center for Spiritan Studies, 1980), 15.

speaks."[18] And in their 2013 Bagamoyo (Tanzania) document on education and Spiritan mission, the congregation affirmed:

> We have received a spiritual heritage rooted in the "apostolic life" (SRL 3). Fidelity to prayer sustains and supports our "practical union". We are becoming more aware of the call to a deeper interior life and a greater integration of our work and prayer.[19]

James Okoye, in a reflection on the Bagamoyo conference, likewise points to this essential unity as a central insight of those gathered at the event: apostolic activity must be nourished by prayer, and prayer gains its direction and depth through its connection with action.[20]

I believe that in this dynamic interrelationship of contemplation and action, imagination is at work, in the sense supported by Sloan, as the capacity continually to translate between and among the demands, uncertainties, joys and griefs of mission—"apostolic life"—and the way one prayerfully seeks union with the will of God—"interior life." Contemplation helps to stir up passionate commitment to God and others through bringing the images of one's complex missionary relationships into continual, prayerful discernment, and reshaping these in light of the divine purpose. Action offers the opportunities to transfer passionate, Spirit-infused commitment into imaginatively transformed encounters and practices. Thus, new insight is "undivided, 'total and immediate,'" and vital to everyday living.[21]

Foundational commitments are essential to give form to the new insights made possible through imaginative encounters. Thus Spiritan mission has specific priorities and contexts through which its members seek to live "practical union," as shaped by key Scriptural texts. These comprise my second theme.

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[18] Congregation of the Holy Spirit, *Spiritan Rule of Life* (Congregation of the Holy Spirit, 3rd ed., 1987), #5.
[19] Congregation of the Holy Spirit, *Bagamoyo Chapter Documents* (Congregation of the Holy Spirit, 2013), #2.4.
[20] James Chukwuma Okoye, "What We Have Heard, What We Have Seen with Our Eyes," *Spiritan Horizons* 7 (2012): 7-8.
[21] Sloan, 143.

Spiritan Mission as Evangelization, Liberation and Intercultural Identification

In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus enters a synagogue in his home town, Nazareth, and reads from a scroll of the prophet Isaiah:

> The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
> because he has anointed me
> to bring glad tidings to the poor.
> He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives
> and recovery of sight to the blind,
> to let the oppressed go free,
> and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord" (Lk 4:18-19).[22]

Spiritans find in this passage the core of their mission imperative: to follow Jesus by evangelization and liberation of the poor. This outreach began in Poullart des Places's care for impoverished seminarians and chimney sweeps in Paris and spread through international missionary efforts as spurred on by Libermann. These initiatives brought Spiritans into difficult and dangerous situations in which a number of them perished, particularly from disease. Their commitments to evangelization and liberation, deepened through imaginative insights, helped to sustain them.

For example, Coulon explores a Spiritan spiritual orientation through which the missionary enters into identification with the *kenosis*, self-emptying, of Jesus on the cross. This theological theme is central to the Christian apostle Paul's hymn in his letter to the Philippians ("Rather, he emptied himself… he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross…" Phil 2:7-8). Coulon goes on to argue that for Libermann, "mission is to be thought and lived out in terms of *conversion…* and in terms of both *cultural* and *spiritual kenosis… in imitation of Jesus Christ.*"[23]

Spiritans, as their work in Africa highlights, have understood their mission to the poor as a calling into such "*cultural* and *spiritual kenosis*." One of Libermann's most memorable injunctions to the early missionaries

[22] New American Bible Revised Edition.
[23] Coulon, 28; emphasis in original.

encapsulates both the priority of the calling to evangelization and liberation, and the imaginative strategies of inculturation required for obedience to this calling. He wrote, contrary to those who insisted on retaining European mores in their mission work:

> Do not judge according to what you have seen or have been accustomed to in Europe. Divest yourselves of Europe, its customs and mentality. *Become negroes with the negroes,* and you will judge them as they ought to be judged. Become negroes with the negroes, to train them as they should be trained, not in the European fashion but retaining what is proper to them. Adapt yourselves to them as servants have to adapt themselves to their masters, their customs, taste, and manners, in order to perfect and sanctify them, to raise them from their low level and transform them slowly and gradually into a people of God.[24]

One can detect here the importance of imaginative openness in an interior, kenotic movement through which white Europeans attempted to set aside their culturally constructed identities and adopt the identities of the "others" they encountered, in order to serve them. Our contemporary perspective may lead us to doubt whether such a full assimilation into the identity of the "other" as "Become negro with the negroes" is possible or even desirable. However, it is apparent from the continual citation of this passage that Spiritans' spirituality for mission has been catalysed through it.

Per Coulon, Libermann understood the process as "a movement of volition and an active effort."[25] The significance of this effort as integral to the Spiritans' imaginative identification with the poor is strengthened by an understanding of how the term *nègre* ("Negro") was understood in Enlightenment-era France, the context that shaped Libermann's and most early Spiritans missionaries' thinking. As documented by Andrew S. Curran, *nègre* was used synonymously with *esclave* (slave), and was informed by natural science investigations that reinforced racist

[24] Koren, 175, quoting *Notes et Documents relatif à la vie et l'ouevre du Vénérable F.M.P. Libermann* (Paris: 1929-50), 9, 330; emphasis added.
[25] Coulon, 1.

identifications of Africans with a human status permanently inferior to that of whites.[26] A key section of Curran's conclusion is worth quoting at length:

> If, during the era before "Enlightenment," blackness came into relief against a synthesis of biblical exegeses and vague physical explanations dating from antiquity, during the eighteenth century, the concept of blackness was increasingly dissected, handled, measured, weighted, and used as a demonstrable wedge between human categories….[The] eighteenth-century belief in the deep-rooted physicality of Africanness helps us to comprehend the power of "representation" and its connection to "reality" in the era's thought. The anatomization of blackness, in short, not only reflects the violence enacted on black bodies in the pursuit of knowledge; it mirrors the increasingly rationalized brutality to which real Africans were subjected during this time in the colonial world.[27]

This representation-reality connection makes all the more apparent the importance of Libermann's injunction to his missionaries. If they were aspiring to be "*nègre* with the *nègres,"* they were embracing a radical identification with the poorest and most despised of humanity—a volitional act of imagination of the most kenotic sort.[28] From an educational perspective, we can consider this as a call to epistemological

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[26] Andrew S. Curran, *The Anatomy of Blackness: Science and Slavery in in an Age of Enlightenment* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), 9-10.

[27] Curran, 223-24.

[28] I am indebted to Elochukwu Uzukwu for providing this insight and for the reference to Curran's work in reinforcing the argument (personal conversation, 15 June 2018). Coulon makes a similar point: "Consequently, at the end of the evolution in vocabulary [in Libermann's writing] that runs from 1840 to 1846, it seems that the word 'Negro' designates, in Libermann's mind, not only 'Black' but Black considered as sub-human and as a slave, the result being the disappearance of the word 'Negro' in his *writings except when he wants to refer precisely to the negative and tragic aspect of their historical situation marked by slavery and the slave trade*" (42; emphasis added). Coulon uses this construction by Libermann to reinforce his case for the "kenotic" nature of Libermann's missionary spirituality.

conversion, made possible through God's grace and openness to God's Holy Spirit, but given form and sustained through the scriptural texts' summons to evangelization and liberation, and imaginative identification with the self-emptying character of Jesus Christ. By seeking to become *nègre*, one is taking on a new identity that deepens empathetic identification with the subjects of one's encounter—in this case, Africans—to whom the Good News of Christ can then be most effectively addressed. Sloan, for whom volition is central to disposing oneself to insight, this effort would be an example of how "will is called into play in all its fullness and energy as the active openness of the whole person to the influx of new meaning and new perception."[29] It is vital to critique the failures of Spiritans and other missionaries to realize this vision, as evident in their systematic collusion with the colonizers of Africa. Yet Libermann's exhortations remained as a prophetic source calling his confreres to continual reorientation of their purpose, in light of the Gospel.[30]

To push a bit further into the historical setting for such missionary vision and endeavour, note that Coulon points out the support for abolition growing in Europe in the early nineteenth century, as well as fervour for liberty in the wake of the French Revolution. He believes that Libermann's confreres were making the connection between ending slavery as an institution and bringing Africa, the source for slaves, to Christianity. He cites, for example, 1847 correspondence by Spiritan Bishop Etienne Truffet in which he denounced slavery. Per Truffet, writing to Savoy King Charles-Albert, "we are especially apostles of liberty, being destined to deal the last blow to slavery by converting the people amongst whom

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[29] Sloan, 167.

[30] Besides the critical historical analysis of Paul V. Kollman as cited below, see the discussion by V.Y. Mudimbe with his claim that "The more carefully one studies the history of missions in Africa, the more difficult it becomes not to identify it with cultural propaganda, patriotic motivations, and commercial interests, since the missions' program is indeed more complex than the simple transmission of the Christian faith" (V.Y. Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge* [Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, and London: James Currey, 1988], 45). Mudimbe contends that missionaries were as committed to advancing the Western political empire and the values of its civilization as to spreading Christianity (47).

slaves are exclusively procured."[31] Coulon contends that the central insight here was that by carrying the Gospel to Africans, Spiritans were directly participating in "proclaim[ing] liberty to captives" (Lk 4:18).

Contemporary scholarship such as that by Paul Kollman, however, warns us against hagiographical interpretations of Spiritans' intentions as they pursued these policies. As he demonstrates in his study of the Spiritans in their mission in Zanzibar in the 1840s, their motivations were complex. Convinced of the priority of saving souls and establishing the church in mission territories, they typically refrained from outright condemnation of slavery and took a pragmatic approach, often using description of its horrible realities as a rhetorical strategy for mission fundraising in Europe. Their need to assuage the local Muslim sultan in order to maintain safety and continue their mission also contributed to their reticence to be openly abolitionist.[32]

Nevertheless, Libermann's writings remained strongly influential, such as this acknowledgement of the slaves' terrible conditions, along with affirmation of their equality among all humans before God:

> Everywhere, they are in [a] truly miserable condition of ignorance and superstition. Nobody stretches out a hand to free them from the infernal power that holds them in bondage…. And yet, they are made in the image of God like all other people, and they are ready to welcome the gift of Faith that they have never known.[33]

Thus, while often hindered by their human limitations, examples such as this show how Spiritans were capable of an imaginative leap in their understanding of liberation that offered significant inspiration amid the severe difficulties of their missionary efforts, and might serve to moderate some of the baser motivations for bringing Christian-European civilization to Africa.

Today, the *Spiritan Rule of Life* continues to emphasize the call to evangelization and liberation as central to Spiritans' mission.

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[31] Coulon, 8.
[32] Paul V. Kollman, *The Evangelization of Slaves and Catholic Origins in Eastern Africa* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2005), especially Chap. 2, 45-83.
[33]Cited in Kollman, 62,as Libermann, N.D. VIII, 233.

> The evangelisation of the "poor" (cf. Lk 4:18) is our purpose (cf. N.D XIII, 170). Therefore we go especially to peoples, groups, and individuals who have not yet heard the message of the Gospel or who have scarcely heard it, to those whose needs are the greatest, and to the oppressed (cf. N.D. II, 241). We also willingly accept tasks for which the Church has difficulty in finding workers.[34]

These very commitments are a source of renewal for the missionaries: "Our closeness to the poor brings us to hear afresh the gospel that we are preaching. It becomes an unceasing summons to conversion and an invitation to adopt a simple style of life."[35]

In preaching the Gospel to the poor, Spiritans seek to form new community with them. This inclusive character of Spiritan mission, then, leads to my third priority for imaginative encounter: the dynamics of communal living for Spiritans and those with whom they minister**.**

Community, Hospitality and the Challenge of Intercultural Living

Spiritans have embodied the commitment to community throughout their history; as their motto encapsulates, they seek to be of "One Heart. One Spirit."[36] As with other Roman Catholic congregations, they dedicate themselves to God and one another in shared vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, guided by their *Spiritan Rule of Life.* A Vietnamese Spiritan, Pfung Manh Tien, points out that the *Rule* lays the foundation for community in the Holy Spirit's call to unity amid diversity. Members are urged to ongoing conversion toward this unity. "Thus we are invited to live every experience in the Spirit of God—our joys, our hardships and our pains, the works we undertake in our zeal, and even our failures (SRL 88)."[37] Associated with "practical union" in the *Rule of Life* text, this communal way of being is one in which the Spiritan exercises imaginative capacity to uncover the Holy Spirit's presence in the midst of community

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[34] *Spiritan Rule of Life,* #4.
[35] *Spiritan Rule of Life,* #24.1.
[36] Congregation of the Holy Spirit Province in the United States, "Our History," accessed 18 September 2017, http://spiritans.org/about-us/our-history/.
[37] Phung Manh Tien, "The Holy Spirit in Spiritan Life," *Spiritan Horizons* 12 (2011): 21.

life. This animates a corresponding impetus and orientation for mission engagement: proceeding from one's religious community into the building of new community with others

Congregational relationships provide strength to continue the mission, especially when members are experiencing great difficulties. However, the diversity resulting from Spiritans' international membership and locales makes the fostering of community especially challenging. Their insights regarding this task thus provide us with particularly valuable guideposts for imaginative encounter. In this section I will focus on the work of two Spiritan scholars who write for a broader academic and ministerial audience yet show a distinctly Spiritan flavour in their attention to relationship building among diverse members.

A Nigerian Spiritan theologian, Gregory Olikenyi, draws upon his Igbo cultural identity in a theological exploration of *hospitality* as a model for Christian evangelization. He outlines the three essential elements in the practice of hospitality: host, guest and reciprocity. Igbo hosts and guests encounter one another in prescribed ways that may be surprising to other cultures, especially individualistic cultures such as those of the global North. For instance, the "host" is not simply one person or household, but by extension the entire local community. The "guest" carries a sacred character "in the sense that he [or she] is highly esteemed and treated with *respect* and *care*."[38] Most strikingly, all those involved hold assumptions about the nature of reciprocity in the host-guest relationship that prevent these from becoming permanent identities. Olikenyi maintains that reciprocity entails "an *unconditional readiness to share* (give and take) both material and non-material things such as foodstuffs, clothes, visits, ideas, condolences and so on."[39] In the rituals of host-guest encounters, each partner in the relationship understands that whatever is *received* in this encounter may require the readiness to *give* in another encounter.

While this mutuality is explicit in what Olikenyi calls the "direct reciprocity" afforded between family members, it is also implicit in the "indirect hospitality" among those not related by blood. Since all Africans understand themselves as "potential travelers," the expectation is that one

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[38] Gregory Ikechukwu Olikenyi, *African Hospitality: A Model for the Communication of the Gospel in the African Cultural Context* (Saint Augustin, Germany: Steyler Verlag, 2001): 104; emphasis in original.
[39] Olikenyi, 105.

who is a traveller and receives hospitality will exercise it in turn to other travellers.[40] I believe that recognition of such interdependence requires a disposition of imagining oneself, while in one role, continually living with the potential of the other role—thus the guest must anticipate a future role as host, and the host as guest, for true reciprocity to grow. Accordingly, the reciprocity of hospitality offers a dynamism to each encounter that imaginatively roots it in the past and future as well as the present.

Anthony Gittins, a US Spiritan sociologist of religion, has offered to all those in mission work a model for "intercultural living" which speaks to the pressing needs of international religious congregations today.[41] Building on the assumptions of shared community life, he argues that today's multicultural realities make the fostering of community both more challenging and potentially richer, as experiences that can foster greater unity in the Spirit. Like the Spiritans, many other congregations have found their centre of gravity shifting decisively toward the global South, as membership grows there and shrinks dramatically in the global North. With these shifts, a kind of "reverse mission" is on the rise, as the Southern cultures who formerly received missionaries become the source of missionaries to the North. As responsibilities to sustain the congregations' work pass more fully to the members of the newer cultures, communal identity is increasingly diverse. (At my university, for example, the resident Spiritan community includes members from Nigeria, Ireland, Scotland, France and Mauritius, as well as the United States.)

Gittins presents three models for community among diverse members. In the first, "community of invitation," new members are invited and expected to assimilate to the community's existing cultural norms. Here the expectation is that the community remains "monocultural." The second model, "community of inclusion," welcomes new members with the hope that their new perspectives will enrich the community and help it become more faithful to its mission. While ostensibly more "multicultural," this model can lead to confusion and upheaval because the direction of incorporation is often from the top down. By ignoring inherent

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[40] Olikenyi, 108.

[41] Anthony J. Gittins, *Living Mission Interculturally: Faith, Culture and the Renewal of Praxis* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2015).

power dynamics, it can result in mere tokenism and unchanged communal structures.[42]

Gittins's third model, "community of radical welcome," seeks to move into a genuinely *intercultural* identity. It requires reassessment by all members of the community's resources, with explicit attention to the contributions made by the newer members. "Theologically speaking, intercultural community members are drawn from diverse cultural backgrounds but share an intentional commitment to fellowship, motivated not simply by pragmatic or commercial considerations but by a shared religious conviction and common mission."[43] For Spiritans, their founding spirituality and its embodiment in their *Rule of Life* show that their particular openness to the Spirit requires the sustained commitment to mutual engagement with others, while honouring others' uniqueness.

This intercultural approach requires, once again, a kenotic spirituality consonant with the ministry of Jesus Christ:

> Jesus chose to become a person of the margins, a sociological and biblical "stranger" rather than a person of power and influence. Influential people occupy central positions where power and authority lie. But Jesus chose the most effective way to encounter the people marginalized by circumstance and by society: outreach to society's "them" or "other"—whether by gender, ethnicity, religion, lifestyle, or social or moral standing. For him, margins and boundaries were points of engagement rather than marks of separation or discrimination.[44]

Yet, to invoke Olikenyi's notions of reciprocity in hospitality, the vulnerability of intercultural community members is mutual. Each must, in turn, be "host" and "guest" as a new entity emerges from the group's various elements. Virtues such as respect, tolerance and forbearance are essential, as well as knowledge of helpful insights from psychology and sociology to make sense of the complexities of intercultural engagement.[45] Members acknowledge but look beyond their ongoing, sinful failures to

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[42] Gittins, 180-83.
[43] Gittins, 63.
[44] Gittins, 12.
[45] Gittins, 184.

live in true mutuality, sustaining an imaginative immersion in the eschatological possibilities that God offers for God's beloved people.

Keeping in mind this selective overview of prominent themes from Spiritan history and their connections with imagination-insight, let us now move more intentionally to educational considerations.

Sloan's "Insight-Imagination" and Rethinking Spiritan Education as Imaginative Encounter

For several years a lively discussion has taken place among Spiritans and other faculty at Duquesne University regarding the nature of Spiritan pedagogy—focused, though not exclusively so, on faculty-student encounters in teaching and learning. In panel presentations, essays, brochures and many informal conversations, key elements have surfaced that are consonant with many themes already presented in my essay. Concurrently, two colleagues (Anne Marie Witchger Hansen and Steven Hansen) and I have undertaken a research project in which we have surveyed Spiritan educators and "formators" (those involved in the formation of new Spiritans) throughout the world. We have posed questions designed to elicit Spiritans' self-understandings as educators and the types of experiences they consider educative.

In this section, then, I will weave together key aspects of Sloan's educational theory from his major work, *Insight-Imagination,* with the Spiritan themes already described and the wisdom of contemporary Spiritan and Spiritan-inspired educators. I believe that this correlational analysis yields new insights worthy of consideration for educators interested in fostering imaginative encounters.

Imagination and Holding the Tension between Openness and Involvement in Educational Spaces

As noted earlier in this essay, Sloan's interest in imagination arises from its capacity to catalyze new knowledge through inspired rearrangement of elements into new configurations, reshaping our accepted thought patterns into something more than the sum of their parts. He cautions, however, that this capacity must be distinguished from "imaginative fancy," in which one

focuses on "memories, habits, personal biases and predilections, social conventions, and so forth," in ways that reinforce prejudices and produce rigid epistemological structures.[46] He posits that avoiding these flights of fancy involves the use of both "formal logic" and exercise of the "will." Logic is required to order one's categories into coherence, but must always be subordinated to the authentic use of imagination. The latter draws its authenticity from the exercise of the will to create "the active openness of the whole person to the influx of new meaning and new perception."[47] The habit of such orientation to imagination-insight (terms used synonymously by Sloan) will then be characterized by "openness, spontaneity, anticipation, affirmation, and sustained, critical directedness."[48] New insights and an orientation toward intentional action emerge in the will's ability to hold "tension between openness and involvement."[49]

I believe that Libermann's and other Spiritans' convictions about the intentional cultivation of interdependence between contemplative and apostolic dimensions correspond closely to Sloan's approach of holding imaginatively the tensive relationship between openness and involvement in order to foster new insight. Per Sloan, responsibly logical, willingly open attentiveness to meaning allows insight to emerge. In Spiritan-friendly terms, then, human volition in cultivating contemplative and active dimensions, in concert with the Spirit's gracious activity, fosters practical union for Spiritan educators and their students in educational encounters.

At Duquesne University and among the Spiritan educators in our research study, the work to sustain teachers and learners alike in this tension takes many creative forms. One Duquesne professor described, for example, a class in which the students were struggling with a difficult textbook. She invited them into a contemplative exercise in which they reflected upon and spoke honestly about the nature of their difficulties. She then supported them in a rereading in which they searched for compelling, short passages and shared these with peers. "Rather than trying to understand a text that is outside of them and 'inaccessible,' students inquired about the contact between interiority and information, where

[46] Sloan, 166.
[47] Sloan, 167
[48] Sloan, 167.
[49] Sloan, 168.

knowing emerges."[50] Here we see the skilful creation of an educational environment with sufficient flexibility and mutual trust to promote "open" exploration of a text for which a more reasoned, "involved" exercise of the students' intellectual volition alone had been inadequate. "Interiority," both individual and communal, combined with "information" for new insights and promoted the likelihood of improved individual and communal engagement with the text in the future.

Further examples of openness and involvement are glimpsed by moving beyond the Duquesne University campus into our research team's current study on Spiritan educators worldwide. We have been struck by how readily many have named non-schooling environments and encounters as occasions for claiming their identity as "educators."[51] For example, our data include a story by a Spiritan in Africa of how one of his school's young students fell critically ill, and how he worked with his confreres to provide medical assistance to her. "[B]efore she died, she confessed that her soul was at peace because of the love she has received and that she had seen a difference in the Catholic Church through the Spiritans."[52] Others spoke of international gatherings where Spiritans taught one another through their shared mission to the poor and to intercultural living, as specific examples of "Spiritan education" at work.

Such accounts make evident how the Spiritans' openness to divine encounter through the Holy Spirit allows them to name imaginatively the educative dimensions of critical, transformative experiences in both "formal" and "informal" educational settings. Given Spiritans' commitment to work with the poorest and most marginalized, it is not surprising that they uncover and respond to these diverse possibilities. As with the Duquesne professors, the conviction that the Spirit is moving *within and among* all participants keeps teachers committed to a style in

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[50] Steven Hansen, Steven, Sandra Quińones, and Jason Margolis, "Spiritan Pedagogies in Practice: Possibilities, Tensions and Characteristics of Walking With Learners," *Spiritan Horizons* 10 (2015): 103.

[51] Anne Marie Witchger Hansen, Steve Hansen, and Maureen O'Brien, "Describing a Spiritan Pedagogy: The Expression of the Spiritan Charism in Teaching Practices of Spiritans and Lay Spiritan Associates in Secondary Education, Higher Education and Spiritan Formation Houses," Duquesne University, in progress.

[52] Witchger Hansen, Hansen, and O'Brien, Respondent #16.

which learners can be gently invited to share in the "tension between openness and involvement," finding in the multitude of ministry settings the spaces for gaining unanticipated wisdom. As Sloan puts it, "The imagination is not only that sense in Mary Warnock's phrase that 'there is always *more* to experience, and *more in* what we experience than we can predict' (and control), but it is also the means wherein that *more* to and *more in* can be revealed."[53]

Caring, Holistic and Reciprocal Encounters

The compassion evident in the Spiritan's story cited above provides a fitting introduction to another aspect of education as imaginative encounter. In *Insight-Imagination,* Sloan continually emphasizes the importance of emotions in the creation of new knowledge through imaginative reordering. Again, this is not a superficial "fancy." Rather, there is an emphasis on personal agency as people are taught to "feel for themselves," rather than passively accept external emotional manipulation, and to discern appropriate and inappropriate feelings as the occasion warrants.[54] Here Sloan is insistent that other-directed emotions are crucial for imaginative construction of knowledge: "In love and compassion feeling becomes not only an organ of perception but also an organ of cognition in which experience and knowing are one."[55] In intentional encounters with others in which one respectfully negotiates the tension between their integrity and the imperative to relationship, one may be able to receive what is revealed through them and achieve a new level of understanding.

I find in this emphasis of Sloan's a strong resonance with the work of Olikenyi and Gittins. While Spiritans are continually enjoined, in the expression of some of our research participants, to move through their ministry in a "centre/out" direction, this is done for the sake of creating new "centres" of mutuality in service and love. As Olikenyi maintains, the practices of Igbo hospitality are premised on reciprocity—one is sometimes a host, sometimes a guest. In teaching and learning, while there may be unequal relationships within formal educational contexts, care for

[53] Sloan, 148-49.
[54] Sloan, 163.
[55] Sloan, 164-65.

the other involves continually working to increase the other's ability to participate as co-learner and co-teacher. The offering of love, compassion and concern for the whole person invites such mutuality and reciprocity, and thereby increases the possibility for imaginative insights as participants shift their perspectives back and forth.

For example, in a moving educational narrative, a Duquesne professor described how she regularly teaches a course that brings her students into empathetic encounter with underserved populations in local neighbourhoods. Starting with the students themselves, she does a series of class exercises in which they are invited to place themselves imaginatively within meaningful locations—a beautiful landscape, their childhood home, the centre of campus—and develop attitudes of care and involvement through the awakening of their emotions. They are then more fully disposed to move into a variety of community-engagement projects to serve the poor and marginalized. The professor comments, "I think that Spiritan pedagogy must awaken the heart and then appeal to our students' competence, creativity, and professionalism and show them that they have a gift to give to the world. We drive with the learners so that they themselves can drive the bus."[56] Through being "guest" in their own studies to the "host" professor, students become more prepared to encounter others and treat them, in turn, as "guests." Their emotions are directed, in Sloan's terms, into serving as an "organ of cognition" through the mutuality of their classroom and community encounters.

Similarly, one of our research study subjects, when asked to describe a "distinctively Spiritan educational experience," simply responded: "Teaching students how to go into the community and listen to clients and staff and to BE present to them, building relationships first."[57] When this happens, as another research participant expressed it: "For me a Spiritan educational experience is one that is 'center/out.' It begins with the lived experience of the student, their center, and from that base pushes them out to the margins of their world. At the margin they experience diversity in thought, person and worldview."[58] Rather than the educational setting existing as a position of privilege, it is transformed into a "centre" of

[56] Hansen, Quiñones, and Margolis, 101.
[57] Witchger Hansen, Hansen, and O'Brien, Respondent #23.
[58] Witchger Hansen, Hansen, and O'Brien, Respondent #20.

community offering strength, support and clarity of purpose for the mission "out."

Implications for Christian Tertiary Education in Africa

As already acknowledged, my social location restricts my ability to speak to the African tertiary context. I hope, however, that the preceding analysis offers insights worth pondering for the future educational endeavours of educators in Christian institutions on the African continent. Here I will briefly suggest several further, interrelated implications.

Education Should Be Broadly Construed and Concerned with Continual Reshaping of Its Forms

The Spiritan model in dialogue with Sloan's writing calls to mind religious educator Maria Harris's characterization of education as the "work of giving form…especially concerned with the creation, re-creation, fashioning, and refashioning of form."[59] Her aesthetic model correlates well with the case for an educational style that fosters imaginative encounters . "Form" may carry institutional connotations, but it extends beyond structures, policies and procedures to encompass all the patterns of relationship within a faith community, an institute of higher learning, a formation centre and other entities. When the entire community or institution is co-responsible for shaping and reshaping its forms, imagination will be continually at play among the participants in an artistically creative way, and will be directly catalysed through their willingness to encounter their traditions (religious and otherwise), other participants and the cultures and traditions in which they are immersed.

By their very nature, such educational encounters will emulate the Spiritans in moving beyond the traditional classroom. They will require a discipline of "centre/out" movement, both for the sake of fidelity to the institutional tradition's religious and ethical imperatives, and from the recognition that education happens most fully and transformatively in

[59] Maria Harris, *Fashion Me a People: Curriculum in the Church* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1989), 40.

meetings with diverse others. In Gittins's framework, such encounters can lead to forging of intercultural and interreligious relationships with them—new models of community attentive to the changing forces affecting the institutional mission. Strategic planning, curriculum development, budget allocations and other key dimensions of tertiary institutions can then be reconceived in terms of their multiple and shifting relationships with all their constituencies, internal and external.

"Orthopraxy" Should Guide All Religiously Educational Efforts, Including Formation in "Orthodoxy"

Education in religiously-oriented institutions is often concerned with handing on those institutions' particular faith, yet the Spiritan example of imaginative encounter suggests that habitual disposition to union with God in "centre-out" mission should become the driving force and testing ground for any efforts to form participants in core communal beliefs. The integral conjoining of contemplative and apostolic dimensions in Libermann's "practical union" necessitates vibrant attention to the learners' contexts. It also promotes education in an institution's communal tradition that orients participants toward orthopraxy or "right action," especially action geared toward mutual and respectful engagement of religious others in pluralistic societies, with particular emphasis on the poor.

For example, in parts of Africa, some religiously-founded tertiary institutions tend to conduct their religious education in didactic, non-contextual and exclusivist ways that emphasize religious orthodoxy or "right belief." If, as Sloan suggests, both cold logic and flights of sentimentality block true insight-imagination, so will such closed-off presentations of religious traditions block appropriation of both the necessary dynamism of one's own tradition and the ability to have peaceful dialogue and coexistence with those from other traditions. In a study of Nigerian Colleges of Education conducting Christian Religious Studies, Ilesanmi Ajibola highlights the problems inherent in a "confessional-centric" curriculum in a "multi-religious country,"[60] with resulting

[60] Ilesanmi Ajibola, "A Theological Analysis of Confessional-Centric Curriculum of Christian Religious Education: Towards an Inclusive Religious Pluralistic Centered Curriculum for Nigeria Colleges of Education," (PhD dissertation, Duquesne University, forthcoming), 7.

misunderstanding, unrest and violence. In Sloan's terms, in such situations "involvement" is prized over "openness," to the detriment of education and society alike. A Spiritan approach could help in developing educational models in which the treasured faith tradition is imaginatively reinterpreted through the praxis of reciprocal and caring dialogue, conscious of how all participants may be transformed in the process.

Such transformation entails continual development of one's identity—religious, cultural and otherwise—within a supportive community. Thus, a prominent theme in the data from Spiritan participants in our research study is that effective Spiritan education requires working consciously as a Spiritan. While this may seem self-evident, the experience of "being Spiritan" resonated across many respondents' descriptions of educational experiences. One participant, when asked to "Describe a learning experience that you facilitated that you felt was distinctively Spiritan," responded: "As a teacher of theology at a Spiritan theological institute I am trying to walk in the footsteps of those who taught me, who gave their best without asking for much in return."[61] In his own educational context, then, this Spiritan sought to adapt continually and creatively the wisdom of his teachers in consonance with his deep identification as a Spiritan. Yet it is also essential to maintain flexibility in educating for how such particularity can be made meaningful among others, so that "involvement" does not exclude "openness." Thus, another respondent, when asked the same question, simply answered: "It's who I am. I cannot say much more without sounding pretentious. I do in fact emphasize the Holy Spirit as the essential animator of mission and Christian living, *but I would hope I would do that if I were not a Spiritan*."[62] Here, while guided by his congregation's vision and accordingly steeped in its specific identity, he is able to imagine continued openness to the Spirit even outside his vowed membership. Such a disposition bodes well for the kind of educational "orthopraxy" that sustains one's own "orthodoxy" while honouring both commonalities and differences in others.

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[61] Witchger Hansen, Hansen, and O'Brien, Respondent #5.
[62] Witchger Hansen, Hansen, and O'Brien, Respondent #3; emphasis added.

Conclusion

In this essay I have attempted to draw forth from Spiritan resources, past and present, and from Sloan's theoretical framework some helpful glimpses of how we might deepen our educational practice. I believe this can happen through sustained cultivation of learning environments in which "imaginative encounters" can occur. In my own United States higher education context, these attempts can be stymied by many obstacles, not least a prevailing technocratic paradigm that demands quantitative assessment as the true measure of learning, distraction and work overload, limited resources, the varying needs of students and the pressure to keep up in one's academic field. Cynicism can easily take hold. Yet in both Spiritans and Sloan there are the seeds of reinvigoration and renewed purpose. When commitments to service and liberation, community building and flexible faithfulness in mission combine with pedagogies of openness and involvement, Libermann's "practical union" and Sloan's "unity of love and will" can emerge. Imagination begets insight; other-oriented, passionate engagement begets transformation.[63]

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REVITALIZING AND RESTRUCTURING HUMAN SOCIETIES THROUGH CHRISTIAN TERTIARY EDUCATION: THE PROJECT OF SPIRITAN UNIVERSITY NNEOCHI (SUN)

Bede Ukwuije, CSSp [1]

Abstract

Drawing from the example of the newly established Spiritan University Nneochi, Nigeria, the article explores how Christian Tertiary Institutions can contribute to the revitalising and reconstruction of contemporary societies. After presenting the establishment of the SUN as part of the Spiritan vision of education as an integral part of evangelisation, the article shows how different levels of partnership—with the people of Nneochi, the government, the world of technology and other academic institutions—position SUN for the task of revitalising and reconstructing the human society. The article concludes by inviting Christian Tertiary Institutions to confront the question of the loss of the sense of the sacredness and dignity of the human person in order to be faithful to their vocation.

Introduction

In their 2012 General Chapter at Bagamoyo, Tanzania, the Spiritans recommitted themselves to the evangelization of the "new poor." They declared: "We renew once more our focus on education as a way to the integral liberation of individuals and peoples to whom we are sent."[2] Pursuant to this, *The Guide for Spiritan Education (2.5)* fleshes out integral liberation as follows: "Spiritan education seeks to provide the fullest possible growth experience by prioritizing the integration of the spiritual,

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[2] Bagamoyo1.3,4.

human, intellectual, physical, social, and cultural potential of each individual student." God loves all people, yet gives his first love to the forgotten, the oppressed, and the poor. Accordingly, "Spiritan educational works are called to see the reality of the world from the perspective of the poor, forgotten and oppressed."[3]

The Spiritan University Nneochi (SUN), a Catholic University owned by the Congregation of the Holy Spirit and officially approved and licensed by the Federal Government of Nigeria on 6 December 2017, is another milestone in the Spiritan history of education apostolate. It is the second full conventional university owned by Spiritans after the Duquesne University of the Holy Ghost, Pittsburgh, USA. Spiritans own other tertiary institutions that are affiliated to different universities, namely, the Marian University College Bagamoyo, Tanzania, an affiliate of Saint Augustine's University of Tanzania. There is also the Spiritan University College Ejisu, Ghana, an affiliate of Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi. Two other institutions, the Spiritan School of Philosophy Isienu and the Spiritan International School of Theology Attakwu, Enugu (SIST) are respectively affiliated to the Faculty of Philosophy and Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. SIST is also affiliated to Duquesne University for its MA degree.

How can the SUN and other Christian universities contribute to revitalize and restructure contemporary human societies? This is the question that will preoccupy the present article. First, I will situate education as an integral part of Spiritan charism and mission. Second, I will present the project and history of SUN as a prolongation of Spiritan education legacy in the Nigerian/African context. I will show that the process of the creation of the University already involves a form of revitalizing and restructuring of the Nigerian society and reveals the university's potential to do so in the future. Finally, I will argue that in order to better contribute to the revitalizing and restructuring of human societies, the SUN and other Christian tertiary institutions need to confront the question of anthropological crisis[4] which is revealed in the loss of the sense of the sacredness of the human person.

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[3] Guide, 2.1.

[4] *Africae Munus*, 11. http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_ben-xvi_exh_20111119_africae-munus.html

Education as an Integral part of the Spiritan Charism and Mission

A Fundamental Charism

The education apostolate has always been part of the Spiritan charism. In 18th century France, the founder of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit, Claude Francis Poullart des Places, committed himself to the education of the youth. He consecrated his life to poor students who were ready to study. This was enshrined in the Rules of his Seminary. "In this house we shall only admit students whose poverty, conduct and aptitude for study are known to us."[5] He insisted on high standards of academic attainment. In the rule governing admission and subsequent testing of students, he wrote:

> No one shall be accepted, no matter how highly recommended he may be, who has not completed his classical studies and has not the capacity needed to begin either philosophy or theology. Those who present themselves as candidates shall be required to undergo a written and an oral examination. Students accepted in this house shall be examined twice a year in their studies as well as their conduct—that is, at the end of Lent and at the end of July. The Superior shall send away those who have not given satisfaction and who do not give grounds for the future.[6]

However, for Poullart des Places, study was not a mere intellectual exercise but a whole-hearted effort to assimilate as far as it is humanly possible the great truths of divine revelation. Students have to approach their study as a way of openness to God. Part of the formation is courtesy, which, for Poullart des Places, was not simple artificial etiquette, but has to do with one's attitude towards God, namely, an intimacy combined with profound reverence for God and respect for persons, creation and the environment.

In 19th century France, Francis Mary Paul Libermann, who founded the Society of the Holy Heart of Mary in 1841 and became the 11th Superior General of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit after the merger of the two congregations in 1848, highly recommended to his missionaries going to

[5] Claude Poullart des Places, *Rules for the Community of the Holy Ghost*, Rome, Spiritan Sources, 1991, n 5-6.

[6] Claude Poullart des Places, *Rules*, no. 7.

Africa to educate the people to become teachers, farmers and craftsmen. For him, the survival of the newly founded local church must be guaranteed by marrying evangelisation with "civilization" through the school apostolate. Some objected that the missionary is not a school master, Libermann replied: *"*I understand that it would cost the missionary very much to act as teacher. Nevertheless, it is urgent to take this step in order to consolidate their efforts …. In my opinion, to abandon the schools is to destroy the future of missions."[7]

Libermann understood the work of education to be holistic. He wanted his missionaries to work for the development of persons in all aspects of life. Education is "not only from the point of view of moral training but also from the point of view of intellectual and physical formation, that is to say, in teaching, agriculture and trades.[8]" Libermann underlined the connection between evangelisation and civilization, religion and science/arts in the following words:

> A civilization which only learns to use a spade and tools to a basic level will have little effect in improving the behaviour of people. It is not sufficient to show them the practical side of work; they must also learn the theory behind it so that gradually they will no longer need the help of the missionaries to continue with it and they cease to be dependent … it is the task of the missionary to work towards it (faith), not just concentrating on morality, but also on the intellectual and physical side, that is to say, instruction in agriculture and crafts.[9]

Faithful to the founders, the *Spiritan Rule of Life*, while maintaining "the evangelisation of the poor[10]" as purpose of Spiritan mission, presents educational works as among the principal activities of Spiritan mission:

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[7] Francis Libermann, *Notes and Documents* IX, Paris, Maison Mère, 1935, n 44 and 50 -51) Se also Casimir Eke, *In the Footsteps of our Founders: A History of the Spiritan Province of Nigeria (1953-2002)*, SNAAP Press, Enugu, 2006, p. 157.

[8] Francis Libermann, *Notes and Documents*, VIII, 248.

[9] Francis Libermann, *Notes and Documents* VIII, 222-227. See also James Okoye, "Spiritans and Education: An Overview", *Spiritan Horizons*, 9, Fall, 2014, pp 55-65., (p.57).

[10] Congregation of the Holy Spirit, *Spiritan Rule of Life*, Rome, Spiritan Generalate, 2013, n 4

> fostering Christian communities and the education and training of committed and responsible laity; vocations' ministry, training for ministries and for missionary and religious life; engaging in social and educational work in line with our Spiritan calling; awakening an understanding of the universal mission of justice, and kinship between people.[11]

It insists on youth apostolate as one of the "important tasks of our times … because the present situation of young people is crying out more than ever for social and educational works.[12]"

This conviction has been reaffirmed by different General Chapters of the Congregation. The Maynooth Chapter (1998) placed special emphasis on education stating that "formal and informal education is not something on the margins of our apostolate but is an integral part of our mission of evangelisation.[13]" The goal of this education, which privileges the poor, is to restore their dignity as children of God. The Bagamoyo Chapter (2012) considers education "as a way to the integral liberation of individuals and peoples to whom we are sent.[14]"

In view of the above and faithful to the charism of our founders, *The Spiritan Guide for Education*[15] outlined the following as the core values of Spiritan educational works: preferential option for the poor, especially those who are forgotten, oppressed, faith development, fostering respectful relationships and community building, promoting justice and peace and integrity of creation, holistic person-centred education, academic excellence, dialogue with other faith traditions, spirit of service to the society.

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[11] *Spiritan Rule of Life*, n 18

[12] *Spiritan Rule of Life*, n 18.1.

[13] Congregation of the Holy Spirit, *Maynooth 1998*, Rome, Spiritan Generalate, 1999, n 2.12

[14] Congregation of the Holy Spirit, *Bagamoyo 2012*, Rome, Spiritan Generalate, 2013, n1.4

[15] Congregation of the Holy Spirit, *Spiritan Guide for Education*, Rome, Spiritan Generalate, 2017, n 2.1-2.9

Spiritan Education Legacy in Nigeria

Primary and Secondary Education

The early Spiritan missionaries who worked in Nigeria, especially the French, Léon Alexandre Lejeune, and the Irish, Bishop Joseph Shanahan and Archbishop Charles Heerey had experienced prestigious Spiritan colleges, like Blackrock College, Dublin. They knew the story of the establishment of the then Holy Ghost College, Pittsburgh, USA, on October 1 1878, to cater for the educational needs of the Irish immigrants in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The college became the Duquesne University of the Holy Ghost.

Continuing this legacy, Spiritan missionaries in Nigeria established primary, secondary and tertiary schools. Although Léon Lejeune and Joseph Shanahan laid the foundations, it was Charles Heerey that moved the education thrust from primary to post-primary education. In 1953, he established the first Catholic Secondary School, *Christ the King College*, Onitsha and followed up with other Secondary Schools and Teachers' Training Colleges. He considered post-primary education as the master key for social and political transformation. He felt that education should prepare people for political leadership and nation building.

The leading Catholic secondary educational institutions they founded in Eastern Nigeria included Christ the King College (CKC), St Charles Training College, both in Onitsha, Holy Ghost College Owerri, Stella Maris College Port Harcourt, College of the Immaculate Conception (CIC) Enugu, St Theresa's College Nsukka etc. Today, their successors in the four provinces of Nigeria continue to build more schools, such as the Spiritan Academy Amaokpala, Father Philip Agu Spiritan Secondary School Akabo, Bishop Okoye Spiritan Secondary School Mmirinwanyi, Holy Ghost College, Okura, Holy Ghost Secondary School, Benin, Holy Ghost Model College Imuwen, Ijebu-Ode and Holy Ghost College, Sankera.

The Aborted First Catholic University of Nigeria

After stabilizing primary and secondary education and the Teachers' Training colleges, Heerey proposed, in 1955, to establish a Catholic University in Nigeria. He intended to entrust the University to American Jesuits to organize and manage. Correspondences on this issue show that the project was approved by the Spiritan General Administration in Paris. It delegated Bernard Kelly CSSp to help Archbishop Heerey in the strategic planning and logistics. The Vatican Congregation for the Propagation of Faith (*Propaganda Fide*) promised to support the project with financial grant. This was stated clearly in a letter Fr. Bernard Kelly wrote to Fr. Harnett, on 21st March 1959.

> This short letter is to let you know that Propaganda has agreed to give a grant to the proposed University if the Apostolic Delegation approves. This almost amounts to saying that the grant will be given.
>
> I am returning to Paris on Monday, please God and back to Kimmage on Wednesday, March 25th, if possible. Please tell Fr Superior to expect me. Tell him also…and Fr Donoghue, the good news about the University. With my good wishes and blessing from Rome. Yours respectfully in Christ B, Kelly, CSSp.[16]

Unfortunately, the proposal was turned down by the Government of the Eastern Region in favour of the University of Nigeria Nsukka, the bill for whose construction was passed into law in 1955. Why was the permission for a Catholic University turned down by the Government? The correspondences were very economical in expressing the reason. However, discussion with the witnesses of that period, like Denis Kennedy CSSp, Augustine Onyeneke CSSp, bring to light the following reasons.

First, the time in question was the prelude of a very strong pressure for national independence, and part of the struggle was to restrict colonial control and achieve a national control over the social and political economy. From the beginning of the 1900s education in the region, from

[16] Letter of Fr. Bernard Kelly to Fr. Harnett, on 21st March 1959, Spiritan Heritage Centre, Dublin. Consulted on 2nd April, 2018.

Primary to Secondary and Teachers Training has been predominantly in the hands of missionary groups. Because education was closely linked to evangelisation through the schools, it was carried on along competitive denominational lines. As early as 1947, Christian denominations in Eastern Nigeria owned and managed a total of 2885 schools which included 2817 Primary Schools, 14 Secondary Schools and 21 Teachers' Training Colleges.[17] At the end of the civil war in 1970, 116 out of the existing 200 Secondary Schools in the Eastern State of Nigeria were controlled by the different Churches: Roman Catholic Church (73), Anglicans (33), Presbyterians (5) and Methodists (5). The rest belonged to private entrepreneurs (58) and the Government (26).[18]

However, from the 1950s the Government of the Eastern Region openly took measures to limit further spread of missionary, especially Catholic missionary, groups in education. The government started "Council schools" toward a secular society. Government did not want the denominational colour of education which prevailed in primary and secondary schools to flow over into University level which could be the case if a 'Catholic University' was to open. This explains why the Government pressed on with a secular controlled University—the University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

With the project of their Catholic University turned down, the Spiritans decided to invest personnel in the New University of Nigeria in order to maintain a Catholic presence. They also contemplated building a hostel for students. On 12th May 1959, Fr Bernard Kelly, wrote to Fr. O'Driscoll

> As for the University, for the moment at least we have abandoned the idea of starting one of our own—though one can never be sure what will happen in the end. I am sure you know now from experience how

[17] Cf. Augustine Onyeneke, *Modernisation through the Educational System – A Nigerian Case*, 1976, p. 52. Thesis presented to the Faculty of Commerce and Social Science for the Ph.D degree, University of Birmingham England. See also Nuffield Foundation and the Colonial Office, *African Education: A study of Educational Policy and Practice in British Tropical Africa*. Oxford: University Press, 1953, p 46.

[18] Drawn from Casmir Eke, *Spiritan 300 Year History for Nigeria***,** Enugu**,** SNAAP Press, 2006, p. 135**.**

> hard it is to fix things out here. At present I am trying to see if anything can be done to get a footing in the proposed State University that is to open in a couple of years at Nsukka. I have seen a number of people about the possibilities and am to see the Premier as soon as possible after his return from the North, which will be sometime next week. Everything will depend, under God, on his reactions, as he is looking after the University personally. Just now the Bishops are all agreed that we try to open a hostel and see about getting places on the staff for a few Fathers. But, strange though it may seem, that will call for longer and more difficult negotiations than starting a University of our own for the reason that so many different parties are involved—Propaganda, The Mother House and the Irish Province, the Eastern Government, the University Council, the University to which Nsukka will be affiliated, the Principal of Nsukka. And to make matters worse, the last two points don't seem to have been settled yet.
>
> It would, I think be a pity, if nothing at all were done. The S.M.A. Fathers have two of their number on the staff of Ibadan and seem to be able to look after the interests of the Catholics there. Catholics would probably be a very high proportion of the students at Nsukka and it would be most unfortunate if nothing were done for them. The Archbishop is very keen on doing something …. Bernard Kelly, Catholic Mission, Ogui, Enugu.[19]

When the University of Nigeria finally opened from 1960, Fr Betrand Russel C.S.Sp (Irish) joined its staff as a lecturer in Mathematics and virtually started the *Chaplaincy* services for the University. Later, an American Jesuit, Fr McMahon, was officially posted by the Bishops as university chaplain. The idea of a students' hostel was abandoned. The Jesuits later handed the chaplaincy over to Spiritans until the year 2000. A good number of Spiritans taught and still teach at the University of Nigeria.

[19] Letter of Fr. Bernard Kelly to Fr O'Driscoll on 12th May 1959, Spiritan Heritage Centre, Consulted on 2 April 2018.

The SUN as a Product of Spiritan Education Legacy

The present Spiritan University Nneochi draws inspiration from the long history of Spiritan educational endeavours in Nigeria. In order to bring out the importance of this project as a fruit of Spiritan educational legacy, it would be useful to retrace the process that culminated in the birth of SUN. It will be shown also that the process of the creation of the SUN positions it as an institution capable of contributing to the revitalizing and restructuring of human persons and societies.

First, homage needs to be rendered to a Spiritan genius, Emmanuel Edeh CSSp, who singlehandedly established two private universities, the Madonna University Okija, with a campus at Elele, and the Caritas University Enugu. The two universities are respectively entrusted to two of his congregations, the Fathers and Brothers of Jesus the Saviour and the Sisters of Jesus the Saviour.

Edeh was very helpful when he was approached by Peter Agbonome, CSSp, the provincial Superior of Nigeria South East, about the decision of his council to establish a tertiary institution. The initial project was to be a polytechnic, the Spiritan Institute of Science, Agriculture and Technology (SISATEC). Fr. Edeh willingly offered a certificate he had obtained from the Nigerian Universities' Commission (NUC) in view of a private polytechnic. The foundation stone was laid on 21 February 2009 in the presence of the people and dignitaries of Umunneochi, Bishop Gregory Ochiagha, Bishop emeritus of Orlu, and many friends and well-wishers. A few months before the take-off in 2010, SISATEC project was dropped. The setback came from changes in the NUC requirements for obtaining the license for a polytechnic. Considering that there is not much difference between the new NUC requirements for licensing a Polytechnic and a University, Spiritans opted for a University .However the strategic plan of the polytechnic was amended for the university project. The development of the University project upheld a policy based on four levels of partnership, namely, partnership with the people, with the world of technology, with other academic institutions and with the Government. A clarification of these four levels of partnership will help to demonstrate the potentials of the SUN in contributing to the restructuring of human societies.

Partnership with the People

Partnership with the people has always been a policy upheld by Spiritans in the establishment of Schools. As far back as 1956-59 in the wake of nationalism in Nigeria, which challenged the involvement of the Church in education, the Board of Bishops of Nigeria and British Cameroon, headed by Archbishop Charles Heerey, reminded the nation of partnership with the people as a principle of Catholic Education:

> The Catholic Missions have built Catholic Schools over the years and the decades not only on the hard work of Fathers, Sisters, teachers, catechists and committees: they have erected them also and more so, on the firm and unshakable foundations of mutual trust and understanding between themselves and the people of Nigeria. The schools are the tangible proofs of friendship and goodwill. In every city, in every village, and almost every hamlet, they stand as silent witnesses of a partnership in faith and work. They are of the people and from the people and for the people, or at least for the people's children.[20]

This policy was so important that Heerey and his confreres were ready to give up anything else but that. They insisted: "It has been both our policy and our practice. We shall never change from that policy and practice to a different contrary one.*"*[21]

Again, at the inception of the University project, Spiritans were aware of Pope John-Paul II's Apostolic Constitution, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* which insists that "A Catholic University … is immersed in human society; as an extension of its service to the Church, and always within its proper competence, it is called on to become an ever more effective instrument of cultural progress for individuals as well as for society."[22] Therefore, as they started the project of a University, Spiritans insisted on the insertion of the institution in the social tissue of the society through partnership with the

[20] Board of Bishops of Nigeria and British Cameroun, *Educational Circular from Catholic Bishops of Nigeria to all their Adherents*, Onitsha, 1959, p. 2.

[21] Ibid.

[22] John Paul II, *Apostolic Constitution, Ex Corde Ecclesiae, On Catholic Universities*, Rome, 15 August 1990, n 32.

people of Nneochi, in Isuochi, Abia State. Three villages donated pieces of vast land. Regular meetings and consultations were held with the elders and traditional rulers who in turn explained to the people the importance of this project for them. The people understood that missionaries do not have material possessions but they are bearers of the Gospel made concrete in human and social development. They understand also that they themselves are the first to benefit from the university, in terms of development, employment, scholarship for their children, etc. The project has strengthened the alliances between the villages which are now able to resolve long lasting land litigations and mutual suspicion. Up until today, the regular meetings with the elders, traditional rulers and emerging politicians of Nneochi have contributed to the stability, peace and security in the area.

Partnership with the Government

The experience of Government take-over of schools in Nigeria in the 1970s created a lot of animosity between the Church and the state. In the already quoted circular, the then Bishops of Nigeria and British Cameroon fought against the Government's attempt at an exclusive control of education. They feared that the attempt at an excessive control of schools by the government would lead to the eclipse of the spiritual dimension of education. They believed that the distinction between religious and lay schools was meaningless. If the school is for education, then it has to take care of the spiritual, human and professional formation of the human person.

> Every effort … on the part of government to obtain full and excessive control of schooling is an insult to the freedom of the spirit of man …. A government that strives to reduce or remove the place of [the] spiritual growth of people in Education, turns into a servile state. No greater disservice could be done to Nigeria than to lay the foundations of such a state, and no quicker or surer way could be devised than to laicise education by excluding people dedicated to religion from the management and control of our schools. At the bottom this would

> constitute an effort to enslave the soul of the Nigerian Child by making it a puppet of the state.[23]

The rest is history. The Catholic Bishops' prediction came true. Government nationalised the schools owned by the churches. The result was the impoverishment of education which turned many schools into laboratories of mediocrity. Some governors later decided to return some of the major schools to the churches.

Retrieving the spirit of collaboration between the Government and the Church, the Spiritans worked closely with the National Universities Commission and other state agencies that have a stake in education. The process of the approval was not easy due to the bureaucracy of Nigerian government offices. However, the joint efforts of Spiritans, government officials, civil servants, traditional rulers and ecclesiastical authorities, led to the successful approval of the project.

Partnership with the World of Technology

Another fundamental option is the collaboration with the world of technology. In Nigeria, people go to school, get certificates and join the population of the unemployed. Spiritans felt that the country needed technicians and qualified people who could be self-employed. This cannot be done without a close collaboration with the world of technology.

Early in 2018, Malachy Nwabuisi CSSp and I went to Douala, Cameroon to understudy the Institute of Science and Technology (ISTAC) which belongs to the Episcopal Conferences of Central Africa. The experience was overwhelming. The school is small but has the latest equipment in technology paid by the petroleum company, TOTAL. The school has partnership agreements with 70 companies in which the students do their practical outreach. Students alternate between three months in school and three months in the companies. The companies pay students' school fees and their accommodation. They employ the students at the end of their training as engineers.

Drawing from our report, the SISATEC Project Implementation Committee, presided over by Remy Onyewuenyi CSSp, signed a

[23] Board of Bishops of Nigeria and British Cameroun, *Educational Circular*, p 3.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with one of the best Catholic engineering schools in Europe: *Ecole Louis de Broglie*, Bruz, France, through the help of one of her alumni, Engr Camillus Ukwuije. Louis *de Broglie* proposed to train selected lecturers from SISATEC. It will also help to acquire laboratory materials and technical workshop equipment for SISATEC. It will offer distant learning programmes (audio and video), and help SISATEC to source for funds in the European Union. Unfortunately, the MOU was put on hold because of the restructuring of the project from Polytechnic to University. It is however being renewed with the take-off of SUN.

The motto of SUN is *Learning for Industry and Dignity*. Consequently, the report from ISTAC Douala influenced the pulling into the Board of Trustees and the Project Implementation Committee of SUN a good number of men and women who have distinguished themselves in the domain of economy and industry in Nigeria.

Partnership with Academic Institutions

Our next partners are other academic institutions which support us with ideas and strategies through their experiences. A good number of the members of the Board of Trustees and the Project Implementation Committee have served or still serve as lecturers and academic advisers in various universities in Nigeria and world-wide. SUN is happy to partner with Duquesne University of the Holy Spirit. Being the first Spiritan University, Duquesne has supported the growth of other Spiritan Institutions worldwide. The former president of Duquesne, Charles Doherty, visited SUN at its early stage. The other partner institute is the University of Nigeria to which the Spiritan International School of Theology Attakwu and the Spiritan School of Philosophy Isienu are affiliated.

Restoring the Sacredness and Dignity of the Human Person

In order to contribute more effectively to the restructuring of human societies, SUN and other tertiary institutions in Africa would have to

confront the present context of anthropological crisis, i.e., the loss of the sense of the sacredness of the human person.[24]

Anthropological Crisis

Among the duties *Ex Corde Ecclesia*e assigns to a Catholic University is "the protection and advancement of human dignity and of a cultural heritage through research, teaching and various services offered to the local, national and international communities.[25]" We have noted that service to human dignity is embedded in the motto of SUN, "Learning for Industry and Dignity."

Africans cherish and value the sacredness of life. In African traditions, the human person is understood as a network of relationships. The best word to define this network is "relatedness."[26] This is embodied in the Igbo proverb, "*Ife kwulu, ife akwudebeya*" (something stands and something else stands beside it).[27] Eastern and Southern Africans call it *ubuntu*. Our existence is bound together. "My humanity is inextricably bound up in yours."[28] This means that to exist is to be related in a multiplicity of ways. On the other hand, what is not related does not exist.

However, violent atrocities against human life in Africa seem to suggest a loss of the sense of the sacredness and dignity of the human person. At the end of their First Plenary meeting for the year 2017, the Catholic Bishops of Nigeria, decrying the incessant killings in Nigeria declared: "We have found the outright disdain for the sanctity of human

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[24] For more details on anthropological crisis in Africa, see my article, "Retrieving the Sacredness of the Human Person in Nigeria", *Encounter: Journal of African Life and Religion*, 12, Rome, 2017, pp. 99-111.

[25] John Paul II, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, n 12.

[26] Cf. Elochukwu Uzukwu, *A Listening Church: Autonomy and Communion in African Churches*, Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 1996, pp. 35-38; John Mbiti, *African Religion and Philosophy*, London, Heinemann, 1969, p.224.

[27] Cf. Elochukwu Uzukwu, *God, Spirit, and Wholeness*, Oregon, PICKWICK Publications, *2012 Chapter 2*, p.5-39.

[28] Desmond Tutu, *No Future without Forgiveness*, New York, Doubleday, 2000, p. 31.

life totally at variance with both our cultural traditional norms and our religious sensibilities. Life has never looked so cheap.[29]"

The situation is worsened by the ongoing crisis of Fulani herdsmen butchering people in different parts of Nigeria. The same can be said of those who kidnap and use their fellow human beings to make money or for ritual purposes. Addressing this issue, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria said,

> Exposed to violence almost on a daily basis, more and more of our young children are losing their innocence as they watch their parents being randomly slaughtered and their properties vandalized. This violence came to a head with the eruption of Boko Haram. We also note, in particular, the killing of hundreds of Shiites in Zaria in December 2015; the killings in Southern Kaduna and the encounters involving herders and farmers across the Nigerian Savanna, which has led to thousands of killings.[30]

For human beings to reach that level of violence shows that they have lost the sense of the sacredness of the human person, both theirs and that of the other. The loss creates a deep anthropological crisis that needs to be seriously addressed. The Second Synod of Bishops for Africa (2009), having examined the situation in Africa after the genocide of Rwanda and the explosion of violence in the region of the Great Lakes as well as in different parts of Africa, affirmed:

> Like the rest of the world, Africa is experiencing a culture shock which strikes at the age-old foundations of social life, and sometimes makes it hard to come to terms with modernity …. Africa will have to rediscover and promote a concept of the person and his or her relationship with reality that is the fruit of a profound spiritual renewal.[31]

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[29] Catholic Bishop's Conference of Nigeria, Communique at the end of the First Plenary Meeting for the Year 2017, Daughters of Divine Love Retreat and Conference Centre (DRACC), Abuja, 4–10 March 2017,

[30] Ibid.

[31] Benedict XVI, *Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, Africae Munus*, Rome, 2011, n° 11

Another phenomenon is the new form of human trafficking from Africa to Europe, the Americas and Asia. The International Organization on Migration (IOM) estimated that "a record 4, 233 people have died trying to make the crossing in 2016, surpassing the 2015 total of 3,498 (1 January to 8 November)."[32] Those who survive the treacherous journeys are inhumanly treated by human traffickers. Many are sold into slavery and, like objects, discarded when no longer useful! The report says also that camps exist where African girls are sold like animals. Boys are not exempt from this tragic situation.[33]

This brings back the memory of the violence to the sacredness of the human person through the transatlantic slave trade narrated by Walter Rodney and Chinweizu.[34] This tragic history distorted the relationship between Africans and the Western world. The Westerners who bought Africans considered them as merchandise and not human beings. Some traditional rulers settled their internal quarrels by selling their opponents or potential challengers. People used the opportunity of slavery to deal with their enemies, debtors or creditors, etc. There were and are still in some social groups stories and myths, rituals and social structures, which teach children from their age of initiation to disregard people from the other ethnic groups or villages or social strata. All these played a significant role in determining who was sold.

The repetition of this history today is even more tragic. While in those days, as narrated by Walter Rodney, Chinweizu and other historians, it was mostly Western merchants who hunted for African slaves, today, Africans voluntarily present themselves. In those days, it was considered shameful for a girl to be involved in prostitution. Families fought tooth and nail to bring out and even punish or ostracize one member who indulged in such. Today, prostitution has become a family business; some parents

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[32] International Organization on Migration (IOM), http://www.iom.int/news/mediterranean-migrant-arrivals-reach-339783-deaths-sea-4233, accessed(Accessed 15 March 2017).

[33] Cf. Patricia Ebegbulem, *Stop Trafficking in Women and Children. It is a Crime Against Humanity*, Book Builders, Bodija, 2012.

[34] Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. Washington,: Howard University Press, 1974. Chinweizu. *The West and the Rest of Us: White Predators, Black Slavers, and the African Elite*. [1st ed. New York,: Random House, 1975.

and relations sell land and property to send their daughters to Europe and the Middle East for prostitution. According to a Vanguard report, "around 12,000 Nigerian girls or women arrived in Italy by sea in 2015 and 2016, data from the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) shows—a six-fold increase on the previous two years."[35]

This anthropological crisis is a symptom of the erosion of the sense of relatedness which is at the basis of the understanding of the human person in African cultures, traditions and societies. In the atrocious acts against the human person, it is humanity that is wounded, and distorted. Sometimes, people tend to think that there are, on the one hand, perpetrators and, on the other, victims. In reality, all are victims. Desmond Tutu, analysing the devastating effect of apartheid said:

> In a real sense we might add that even the supporters of apartheid were victims of the vicious system which they implemented and which they supported enthusiastically. This is not an example for the morally earnest of ethical indifferentism. No, it flows from our fundamental concept of *ubuntu*. Our humanity is intertwined. The humanity of the perpetrator of apartheid's atrocities was caught up and bound up in that of his victim whether he liked it or not. In the process of dehumanizing another, in inflicting untold harm and suffering, inexorably the perpetrator was being dehumanized as well.[36]

Another dimension of the anthropological crisis is the environmental crisis described by Pope Frances in *Laudato si*. The present environmental crisis has a connection with the spiritual crisis of human beings themselves, precisely, their conception of the world and themselves. We maltreat the earth because we refuse to receive it as a gift from God. "This sister now

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[35] Cf.http://www.vanguardngr.com/2016/11/prostitution-over-12000-nigerian-girls-arrive-italy-16-arrested-but-mummy-still-on-the-run/; (Accessed 15 March 2017).See also https://www.theguardian.com/globaldevelopment/2016/aug/08/trafficking-of-nigerian-women-into-prostitution-in-europe-at-crisis-level, (Accessed: 9 August 2016).

[36] Desmond Tutu, *No Future without forgiveness*, New York, Doubleday, 2000, p. 103.

cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will."[37] In Africa, this ranges from simple bush burning and the exploitation of woods for cooking to the exploitation of natural resources by multinational companies without respect for the populations or the environment. This is done with the complicity of many privileged local people.[38] We include the pollution caused by waste products from the West, including old cars and machines that Africans import. In places like Nigeria electric generators emit toxic gas in the air and generate unbearable noise that destroys the eardrums of sellers and buyers alike.

How can Christian tertiary institutions respond to this deep anthropological crisis? First one must recognize the many complex and interlinked factors that drive the violence on the human person: political instability, poor governance, illiteracy, ignorance, unemployment, extreme poverty, terrorism, conflicts and the false belief that greener pastures await those who make it to Europe.[39]

Tertiary institutions have to factor in this crisis in the education of the youth and society. In the Apostolic Constitution *Veritatis Gaudium*, Pope Francis, borrowing from *Laudato si*, says that this present anthropological and environmental crisis calls for "changing the models of global development" and "redefining our notion of progress.[40]" He notes, however, that "the problem is that we still lack the culture necessary to confront this crisis. We lack leadership capable of striking out on new

[37] Pope Francis, *Encyclical Letter, Laudato Si*, Rome 24 May 2015, n° 2.

[38] Cf. Second Synod for Africa, Proposition 29.

[39] United Kingdom's *Overseas Development Institute* did a well-researched study on the drivers of migration. For more See https://www.odi.org/publications/10217-why-people-move-understanding-drivers-and-trends-migration-europe

[40] Pope Francis, *Apostolic Constitution Veritatis Gaudium, on Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties*, Rome, 29 January 2018, n 3. This document updates and renews the *Apostolic Constitution Sapientia Christiana*, promulgated by John Paul II on 15 April 1979 which encouraged and reaffirmed the Church's efforts to support Ecclesiastical Faculties and Universities.

paths."[41] He challenged Catholic Universities to be actively involved in nurturing this leadership.

This is in line with the recommendations of the first Assembly of the Synod of bishops for Africa. Pointing out the necessity of formation of the youth and the entire African population[42], *Ecclesia in Africa* called on religious institutes to intensify the establishment of schools as well as centres for debates on the meaning of the human person and living together in the society.

> In this time of generalized social upheaval on the Continent, the Christian faith can shed helpful light on African society. "Catholic cultural centres offer to the Church the possibility of presence and action in the field of cultural change. They constitute in effect public forums which allow the Church to make widely known, in creative dialogue, Christian convictions about man, woman, family, work, economy, society, politics, international life, the environment.[43]

Tertiary institutions in Africa can provide the leadership in the area of care for the Earth. This has to be done through urgent practical and concrete actions that were well articulated by the Second Synod of Bishops for Africa (2009):

> To make the earth habitable beyond the present generation and to guarantee sustainable and responsible care of the earth, we call upon the particular churches to:
> - promote environmental education and awareness;
> - persuade their local and national governments to adopt policies and binding legal regulations for the protection of the environment and promote alternative and renewable sources of energy; and
> - encourage all to plant trees and treat nature and its resources with care, respecting the common good and the integrity of nature, with transparency and respect for human dignity.[44]

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[41] Ibid.

[42] John-Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia in Africa*, Rome, 1995, n° 75-76.

[43] John-Paul II, *Ecclesia in Africa*, n 103.

[44] Second Synod for Africa, Proposition 22.

To further help in restoring the sacredness and dignity of the human person Christian Tertiary Institutions should help people re-evaluate how they identify with their cultures in their relationship with others.

Critical Re-evaluation of Cultural Identities

The re-evaluation of people's identification with their cultures for better relationship with others in African societies will lead to question the sprouting ethnocentrism in Africa and worldwide. There is no doubt that ethnicity helps in structuring the human person and contributes to development in different parts of the world. There is nothing wrong for one to self-identify as Igbo, Hausa, Yoruba, Fulani, Ewe, Asante, French, German, etc. The more situated the human person is, the more he/she is empowered to act in the world, locally and globally. However, ethnocentrism is a form of cultural and anthropological crisis that contributes to the division of humanity.

Re-evaluating cultural identification requires rediscovering the deep meaning of culture. Vatican Council II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the World, *Gaudium et Spes*, affirms that the heart of every culture is the humanization of the human being and the society.[45] It is the vocation of culture to help surmount the anarchy of human instincts and the violence that inhabits every human person in order to create conviviality in the society. However, as a living system, every culture is in the process of adapting to the changes of times because individuals who are architects of culture are constantly changing their plans for a successful life.[46] This is also where a culture runs the risk of being dominated by a particular group or ideology that imposes a particular interpretation of its symbols and values. People should be able to be critical about their cultures and values because they are necessarily marked by limitations, violence and sin.

It is the role of the University to nurture intellectuals who will further the project of critique of cultures through the service of the truth. *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* noted clearly that "the basic mission of a University is a

[45] Cf. Vatican II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the World, *Gaudium et Spes*, December 7, 1965, n 53.

[46] Cf. Luis Lutzbetak, *The Church and Cultures. New Perspectives in Missiololgical Anthropology*, Maryknoll, New Yor, Orbis, 1988.

continuous quest for truth through its research, and the preservation and communication of knowledge for the good of society."[47] In a lecture, *Intellectualism and the Development of a People*[48], delivered at the Federal University of technology Owerri, 8th February 2016, Godfrey Onah, the Catholic Bishop of Nsukka, offered an illuminating definition of an intellectual. Borrowing from Theophilus Okere[49], he defined the intellectual as one who "*makes a business of intellecting*."[50] All human beings use the intellect and are intelligent even intellectual beings. But "an intellectual is one who makes the cultivation of the intellect and the acquisition of intellectual knowledge his or her own vocation in life.[51]" More profoundly, "*the intellectual is a minister…at the altar of truth; one who sees as his main obligation to humanity the diakonia of truth*.[52]" This means that the intellectual is not to seek recognition of his society or popularity because that would lead him/her to prostitute his/her skills. Onah wrote again, borrowing from Richard Hofstadter[53], that "*to be faithful to their intellectual vocation, they must avoid all 'undignified prostrations' before wealth and a surrender of their freedom of expression through an undue attachment to the seats of power*."[54]

Unfortunately, a great danger facing Nigeria and other African countries is that a good number of intellectuals and university professors join the chorus of cultural and ethnic propaganda against other ethnic groups. Oftentimes, social media circulate texts from intellectuals who are pro/against Biafra, pro/against IPOB, pro/against Arewa, the majority of which tow the same line of cultural propaganda. Catholic Universities and

[47] John Paul II, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, 30.

[48] Godfrey Onah, *Intellectualism and the Development of a People*, 33rd Public Lecture of the Federal University of Technology (FUTO) Owerri, Imo State, 8th February 2016.

[49] Theophilus Okere, "The Mission of the Intellectual", *Theophilus Okere, Philosophy, Culture and Society in Africa: Essays*, Nsukka, Afro-Orbs Publications, 2015, pp. 130-138, p. 132

[50] Godfrey Onah, *Intellectualism and the Development of a People*, p. 11.

[51] Godfrey Onah, *Intellectualism and the Development of a People*. P. 10.

[52] Godfrey Onah, *Intellectualism and the Development of a People*. P. 10.

[53] Richard Hofstadter, *Anti-intellectualism in American Life*, New, York, Vintage Books, 1962, p. 397.

[54] Godfrey Onah, *Intellectualism and the Development of a People*, p.13.

their intellectuals should educate people to promote what is noble in their cultures and question the violence and sin inherent in them.

The Mission of SUN

The history of SUN shows that it has the potential to contribute to the reinventing and restructuring of the Nigerian society and beyond. Putting all these elements together SUN states its mission as follows:

> … providing opportunities for the inculcation of academic excellence, positive value orientation through the acquisition, conservation, dissemination and application of knowledge for the production of globally competitive graduates. Through a partnership of the laity and religious, government and non-governmental agencies, the University serves God and humanity by providing experiential learning driven by our motto, "Learning for Industry and Dignity.[55]

SUN also makes other commitments which are in line with Spiritan education ethos, namely, holistic commitment to excellence, profound concern for moral, ethical and spiritual values. It takes a strong stand on the question of the protection of minors and vulnerable adults. It maintains an ecumenical atmosphere open to diversity; serving humanity, especially the most disadvantaged; mindful of human capital needs of our nation and the world.[56] The SUN mission statement echoes *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* which states among the roles of Catholic Universities, the "study of serious contemporary problems in areas such as the dignity of human life, the promotion of justice for all, the quality of personal and family life, the protection of nature, the search for peace and political stability, a more just sharing in the world's resources, and a new economic and political order that will better serve the human community….[57]" Time will tell whether SUN will live up to these commitments.

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[55] Spiritan University Nneochi (SUN), Flyer, 2018/2019 Admissions, Spiritan Press, 2018.
[56] Cf. Ibid,
[57] John Paul II, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, n 32.

Conclusion

The emerging Spiritan University Nnoechi (SUN), like every other Catholic University is faced with the challenge of revitalizing and restructuring human persons and societies through education.

Through the presentation of the history and project of this University, I have argued that the desire to respond to the above challenge is captured in its motto, *Learning for Industry and Dignity* and prolongs the Spiritan understanding of education as an integral part of evangelization. The four principles, namely, partnership with the people, partnership with the world of technology, partnership with different academic institutes and partnership with the government, upheld all through the process of the creation of the University show that it has the potential to respond to its vocation. I have also argued that the capacity of such a Christian tertiary institution and others to contribute to the revitalizing and restructuring of human societies depends on the readiness to confront the present anthropological crisis which is expressed through the loss of the sense of the sacredness of the human person. This entails that the Christian tertiary institution be animated by and produce intellectuals who will stand for the vocation of culture, namely, the humanization of the human person and society. Such institutions will provide resources for the critique of cultures through the service of the truth.

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James Chukwuma Okoye, CSSp., Genesis 1-11: A Narrative-Theological Commentary Cascade Books, 2018, pp 147.

Okoye has a particular goal in mind for his short work on the first eleven chapters of Genesis. He wishes to fill a perceived void, namely, the lack of a narrative-theological commentary on this section of the Bible's deeply studied initial text. Okoye is not abandoning linguistic, historical and critical methodologies in the effort. Reading the manuscript, you can feel the classical twentieth century training and scholarly studies beneath it, shoring it up. Okoye's choice of narrative method seems to arise from his teaching experience and intended audience: theological students, pastors and ministers. Because the text is clear and well penned, it could easily also find its way into an undergraduate classroom.

Narrative theology for Okoye envelops some basic dimensions, for instance, narrator, character, plot and view point. He is insightful in understanding that a story does not stand alone. Stories are purposeful. Stories try to tell the truth in ways that critical analysis or ordinary historical parlance cannot accomplish. Hence the twofold but linked subtitle of Okoye's work: narrative-theological commentary.

The genius of Okoye's work is not that it proposes some fantastic discovery or breaks new ground. Its originality and contribution is in how the stories in Genesis 1-11 gain new life and fresh power to communicate insights about God and humankind. In each section of Genesis 1-11 the text examines the dynamics of the narrative. At the same time, Okoye regularly intersperses his text with references to official church teaching (Catholic) and parallels to Ancient Near Eastern texts as well as New testament texts which might have their prefiguration in Genesis. On this last point, Okoye's text may face some criticism. He may not sufficiently articulate the theological issue with reading the Tenach as a prefiguration of the New Testament, especially if one is embracing a narrative methodology. Perhaps he should describe his theological criticism as Christian and Catholic. While it may be useful to know the doctrinal teaching on such issues as humans being immediately created by God, this can also be misconstrued as controlling Okoye's investigation and this would be a tragedy. It would be interesting to read a second volume, based on the first, where Okoye addressed in more depth some great theological themes and issues he identifies: human dignity—what is it? What does it entail? God of love—what is God's forgiveness and mercy? the family of Genesis 1-11 and the family today. Okoye is so correct in affirming that we hear and interpret stories from our own context. It would be wonderful

if he could show European, Asian, South American and American theologians how the African context helps us penetrate the meaning and truthfulness of Genesis 1-11 from an African context. There are little hints in the text but we need more.

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Augustin Ramazani Bishwende: *Le Kivu Balkanisé – Miroir d'une mondialisation mafieuse*, Paris : L'Harmattan, 2017 (Points de Vue), 53 pages.

Frantz Fanon remarked sententiously that "Africa is shaped like a gun, and Congo is the trigger. If that explosive trigger bursts it is the whole Africa that will burst." This booklet, *Le Kivu Balkanisé*, expresses a point view. It is the anguished cry of a Congolese scholar, Ramazani, calling on the world community to be attentive to the carnage and inhumanity in Kivu and to put a stop to the bloodletting, the incestuous offspring of greed, ethnocentrism and implacable quest for political domination. Putting a stop to the bleeding of the Congo is a major contribution to arresting the bleeding of Africa.

The Congo has been a place to watch, a sign of Africa in distress. Ever since the precolonial, colonial and postcolonial times, the history of the Congo has been a site for the enrichment of the few and the exploitation of the many. Yet, it is a geographical region of central Africa that has the potential for providing the material needs of all of Africa and the world. The province of Kivu, according to Ramazani, has the potential not only of being the breadbasket of the world, but also could provide enviable resort centres, and become the fishing site and the mineral centre of the world. Ramazani fears that with the additional discovery of petroleum products in a country that has important deposits of copper and coltan, the carnage will only keep on multiplying. But this does not have to be so. Dating to the distant past that included a past of slavery, Kivu had the history of being multicultural—Bantu and Arabo-Swahili. It was noted for intermarriages, intermingling and interclan connections. Unfortunately, these relationships have been upended by wars and massacres. This booklet by Ramazani is a call to all Kivu nationals to take a stand and defend the brutalized women, men, and children and the land.

What is shocking about the booklet in five small chapters is the pathetic narrative of the pains and sufferings of the Kivu region terrorized by occupation forces: the militia of Uganda, Burundi and Rwanda, the armies of these same countries. Kivu is colonized by settlers from these countries with the connivance of the authorities of Kinshasa, so that the indigenes lose their title to their own land.

Why does Ramazani itemize in some detail the horrors that accompany the colonial occupation: rape, multiple rape, carefully

supervised or choreographed enforced incest, killings, disembowelling of pregnant women, and, yes, brutalities that Ramazani calls sexual genocide? Why do the United Nations forces present in this region for twenty years, stand as impotent witnesses of massacres of well over six million inhabitants of the Congo? These questions are the justification of this booklet—to memorialize the dead and bring to the attention of an uncaring world the systematic perpetration of genocide in the Kivu region.

This is a pathetic and depressing narrative of oppression. It displays the impotence of the oppressed. It lamely ends with a question posed in frustration: Should the international court of justice not set up a special tribunal, supervise a special inquiry on the criminal activities in the Congo? This pillage of a region facilitated with the collusion of the nationals of the Province of Kivu in the various armies and militias, collusion of the political class in Kinshasa, exacerbated and executed by the neighbouring countries must force the citizens and the world community to pause and ask the crucial question: What to do?

The author closes with suggestions of reform and change based on the ethics of collaboration derived from the humanistic ethics of ubuntu and the ethics emanating from the tested practices of African palaver. While the author does not recommend violence, he calls on Kivu youth to enlist in the army so as to defend their province. In view of the forces ranged against the province of Kivu, one is justified to conclude that Ramazani's fifty-three-page booklet is a manifesto that captures the cry of the oppressed. The international community, challenged by organizations such as the highly active *Réseau des Femmes pour un Développement Associatif,* and *Réseau des Femmes pour la Défense des Droits et la Paix* cited often by the author are organs that would help to bring the problem and outcry of Kivu and Congo to the public.

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Augustin Ramazani Bishwende : *La Démocratie doit s'inventer en Afrique*. (Points du Vue) Paris : L'Harmattan, 2017, 193 pages.

The fundamental assumption of this book is that the political economy and the political anthropology of Africa, based on what the author calls the

"soul of Africa"—vitalism, the love-respect for life the ubiquitous presence of life in the African perception of the universe—should form the basis for the reinvention of democracy in Africa. Africans must dump the failed colonial-imperial nation-state ideology that produced in the West and in Africa the dominance of selfish predatory occupation of lands-territories, policed and secured with armaments, not for the development of Africa but for the servicing of the metropole. Unfortunately, in the post-colonial and the 'recolonization' era, the African subalterns, the "évolués" in Belgian parlance, continue the stratified expropriation of the villages, the poor inner cities (bidonvilles) that serve the European quarters and the quarters of the *évolués*.

This book begins its argument by affirming with philosophers that democracy is a lesser evil than autocracy, monarchy, gerontocracy, and other types of dictatorship that do not favour the freedom nor secure the life of citizens. However, the book carefully challenges the Western claim to democracy as peculiarly western, claims made by types like Engels: Western democratic experience presented as an ideal that others do well to copy. Ramazani rather follows Indian political scientist, Amatya Sen, to argue for the historicity of the experience of democracy; it varies from society to society. The western experience is a local version of democracy. This constitutes the basis for his rejection and deconstruction of the western experiment and theory of democracy implanted in Africa; deconstruction and rejection of Africanist claims about colonialism; deconstruction and challenging of colonial education project that claims to "civilize" and "develop" Africa while foisting on Africans a local predatory imperial order for the benefit of the metropole and reducing Africans to inferior humans and bound in a state of dependency. The Western project indirectly benefited only part of the coastal peoples of Africa. In the same vein, Ramazani rejects the development theories/practices of the colonial-imperial West that have no other intention than reducing Africa to producer of cash crops and raw materials.

Ramazani's judgment of colonialism is *sans pitié*: He challenges certain viewpoints of historians on colonialism—a parenthesis, episodic, or radical reformation of Africa? Following Ki-Zerbo and Mveng, he insists that, apart from slavery, colonialism, was the worst part of Africa's historical experience, a distortion and destructulization of the African person, historicity and political anthropology. In the words of the Ki-Zerbo, colonialism was a "hold up" that should never be wished any

society. Colonialism profoundly destabilized African historicity, African land tenure, African collective bargaining in politics, twisting African zonal relationships to the vertical relationships of nations to the metropole based on artificial maps; abandoning African exchange systems and introducing the new rich and creating the new majority poor. Reinventing democracy introduces change not based on the inalienability of the colonial nation-state borders, but on the needs and the future of African creativity.

Repeatedly, in his five chapters, Ramazani locates the nerve centre of the African inspirational political ethics in collective bargaining, the African palaver based on deep conversations, widespread participation and the African vitalistic assumptions that preserves human life rather than normalizing genocide, rape and the destruction of life. Historically, African state formation knew dictatorships and bloody purges that trailed the change of rulers or the struggles to seize power in kingdoms; but African political anthropology has the elements to reinvent democracy in Africa. The aim is to move the continent away from the inherited and destructive nation-state ideology that benefits the colonial powers during these postcolonial times. It continues to create and favour the haves against the multitude of the have-nots in all our countries.

There are different experiences and efforts to introduce change in the post-colony in Africa. This is evident from independence to the formation of OAU/AU and after. But the mega-organism is extremely weak and unable to intervene in civil wars, bloodsheds, pogroms and genocide. Ramazani asks in frustration, why the seduction, among African rulers, with the dominant model of liberal/bourgeois democracy inherited from the West, imaged in a declining nation-state model? Why adopt a model that is declining in the west, leading to the formation of the EU, rather than reinvent with endogenous African construct of collective democracy and palaver that are healthier and built on ethics of participation not violence, on palaver not authoritarianism and autocracy, for the good of the whole society rather than patrimonial appropriation, religious favouritism or the ethnic or "tribal" monopoly? The endogenous is life-enhancing not to be confused with "authenticity" that is nothing but the "reincorporation" of the colonial model in the dictatorship of Mobutu. Simply put, for Ramazani, the colonial inheritance was predatory, the postcolonial successors did not do better but entrenched the predatory. Should Africa not move away from the nation-state model, move away from the sacrosanct boundaries to fluid boundaries of human spaces that look

forward to the effective rather than the gradual unity of one Africa (the Nkrumah model as opposed to the Senghor model)?

The challenge of, and demand for, effective unity is seen by Ramazani as imperative in his analysis and reflection on globalization dominated by the neoliberal market and the imperative need of multinational state or federal state of Africa (Chapters 3, 4 and 5). His evaluation of globalization is negative, even depressing! While the poverty index goes down globally, 46% of the population of Africa live on less than a dollar a day. The postcolonial reinvents the colonial and post-independence in the prebendal expropriation of African resources: whether considered from the perspective of north-south, south-south, cold war, post-cold war relations, Africa is an appendix, dependent, and expropriated by Europe, by Asia especially China. While Europe flogs the African horse in the expropriation of its natural resources, China offers carrots to the horse for its own ends. Is there a way that globalization, democratization, and solidarity can favour Africa? Is there a way the OAU/AU and regional organizations can be transformed into united states of Africa for the good of Africa that moves from the nation-state to the multi-national state to ensure African self-government, democracy invented from the historicity of Africa? That is the subject matter of the last two chapters; and perhaps the contribution of the book.

The multinational state that Ramazani proposes, is hybrid, endorsing the hybridity of African historicity: endogenous as well as incorporating the structures of the West that were part of this history. How does this work out? How can it be democratically worked out: by electoral process, yes, but with radical stress on African democracy, participative and collegial, solidly planted within the genius of African discussion or palaver. On the international stage, by not allowing Africa to be used; but bilateral, north and south relationships for the benefit of Africa, win-win situation for all concerned. Ramazani appropriates his compatriot's, Mwayila Tshiyembe's political philosophy in deconstructing the nation-state for the alternative multinational state: or from state without nation (nation state) to nations as prior in the construction of the state; a move away from the unitary territorial state with the negative price paid in massacres and genocides in Africa, to the existential, functional nations that compose the state with parliaments as centres of consensual palaver. Mwayila Tshiyembe calls this the "republicanisation" of the traditional. But Ramazani has problems with Mwayila Tshiyembe's adoption of the presidential system, because of

the heavy cost of presidential abuses in the Great Lakes and central African regions. He prefers the parliamentary option where palaver would rule.

This is in tandem with the earlier calls of Cheikh anta Diop for the federal state of Africa; a call that reinforces the pan Africanist movement. It is constructed on the African-ness, the citizenship of Africans that expands to the whole continent. This ambitious project that includes a common language as distinct from the colonial languages, federation of states and not confederation, economic, political and military fusion, though attractive is difficult to achieve (Diop and Théophile Obenga support this fully). Why is the Arab north Africa not included in this project?

"Africa is shaped like a gun, and Congo is the trigger. If that explosive trigger bursts it is the whole Africa that will burst." Ramazani in this book, as well as in other works, draws attention to the challenge of reconstruction beginning with the crisis in the Congo. His conversation with progressive historical African theorists and phenomenologists opens another way of reimagining the continent. The weakness of the book is in the numerous long quotes. The strength of the book is in the clear statement that the carnage stops only with a radical historical reimagination of multinational state—the federal state of Africa (ethnicities recognized as nations in the state formation). This is a book not only for political scientists, but the ordinary reader and inventors of a new Africa.

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